AFTER THE BATTLE

THE MASSACRE AT KATYN

Number 92

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CONTENTS

Front cover: Polish gendarmes assisted the German Feldpolizei in guarding the massacre site at Katyn in western Russia. The Germans disclosed the discovery of mass graves in a wood eight miles west of Smolensk in April 1943 and carried out a detailed investigation during the following weeks. (Bundesarchiv)

Centre Pages: For 50 years, the Soviet authorities maintained a Polish cemetery in Katyn wood as a 'Memorial to the Victims of Hitler–Fascist Terror' and it was only after the fall of the Iron Curtain that the USSR finally admitted responsibility for the killings. (Karel Margry)

Back Cover: A little distance away from the other graves, the site of grave No. 8 was kept off limits to visitors by the Soviet authorities for 50 years. Now, it has been marked by a birch cross.

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On September 17, 1939, two weeks after the German invasion of Poland and the beginning of the Second World War, the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east. Poland and the USSR had signed a Non-Aggression Pact on July 25, 1932 (which had been renewed on May 5, 1934), but the Soviets justified their attack by saying that the Polish state had been annihilated and its government no longer existed, that therefore the various Polish-Soviet treaties had ceased to operate, and that the current situation in Poland was a threat to the security of the Soviet state which forced it to act.

Battling against an invasion from east and west, the Polish Army was soon overcome. Several Polish units surrendered to the Soviets induced by a pledge that all officers and men would be released and given a choice either to return home or cross the frontier into Rumania or Hungary so that they could join the Polish forces which were being formed abroad to continue the fight against the Germans. However, units that did so, like the garrison of Lwow, were taken prisoner and deported to camps in Russia. In all, the Soviets took some 250,000 Polish soldiers prisoner, among them at least 8,500 officers.

On April 13, 1943, Nazi Germany revealed to the world that it had discovered a mass grave containing thousands of Polish officers in a wood in western Russia, just west of Smolensk and near the village of Katyn. The Poles, so the Germans stated, had been captured by the Red Army in September 1939 and been murdered by the NKVD, the Soviet secret police, in the spring of 1940. The Soviet Union immediately reacted by accusing Germany of trying to blame the USSR for a crime which she had committed herself. According to the Soviets, the Germans had murdered the Polish PoWs in the autumn of 1941. Thus, a controversy was started that was to last for over 50 years, with no one being punished for one of the worst atrocities of the war. Although for once the Germans were speaking the truth, and the overwhelming evidence pointed to the Soviet Union being the culprit, the Western allies refrained from challenging the Soviet version, since they needed the Soviets in the alliance against Germany and, after 1945, did not want to upset the delicate balance of the Cold War by annoying Moscow with questions about Katyn. As so often, Poland was the tragic loser. (RIOD)

THE KATYN MASSACRE

By Karel Margry

For 50 years after the war, the Soviet authorities maintained the Polish Cemetery in Katyn wood as a 'Memorial to the Victims of Hitler-Fascist Terror'. It was only in 1990, after the fall of the Iron Curtain and shortly before its own demise, that the USSR could bring itself to admit responsibility for the Katyn killings. *Above:* **Just one day before our visit to Katyn in November 1995, snow had fallen and covered the silent wood in majestic white.**

After Germany and the USSR had carved up Poland between them in September 1939, Stalin set about to systematically liquidate all of Poland's potential leaders of opposition, both military and intellectual. Having captured a large part of the Polish officer corps, he had the NKVD concentrate these PoW officers in three special camps in western Russia, all set up on the grounds of former monasteries. *Above:* The Kozielsk camp ([1] on map *opposite*) contained some 4,500 officers. (Rada)

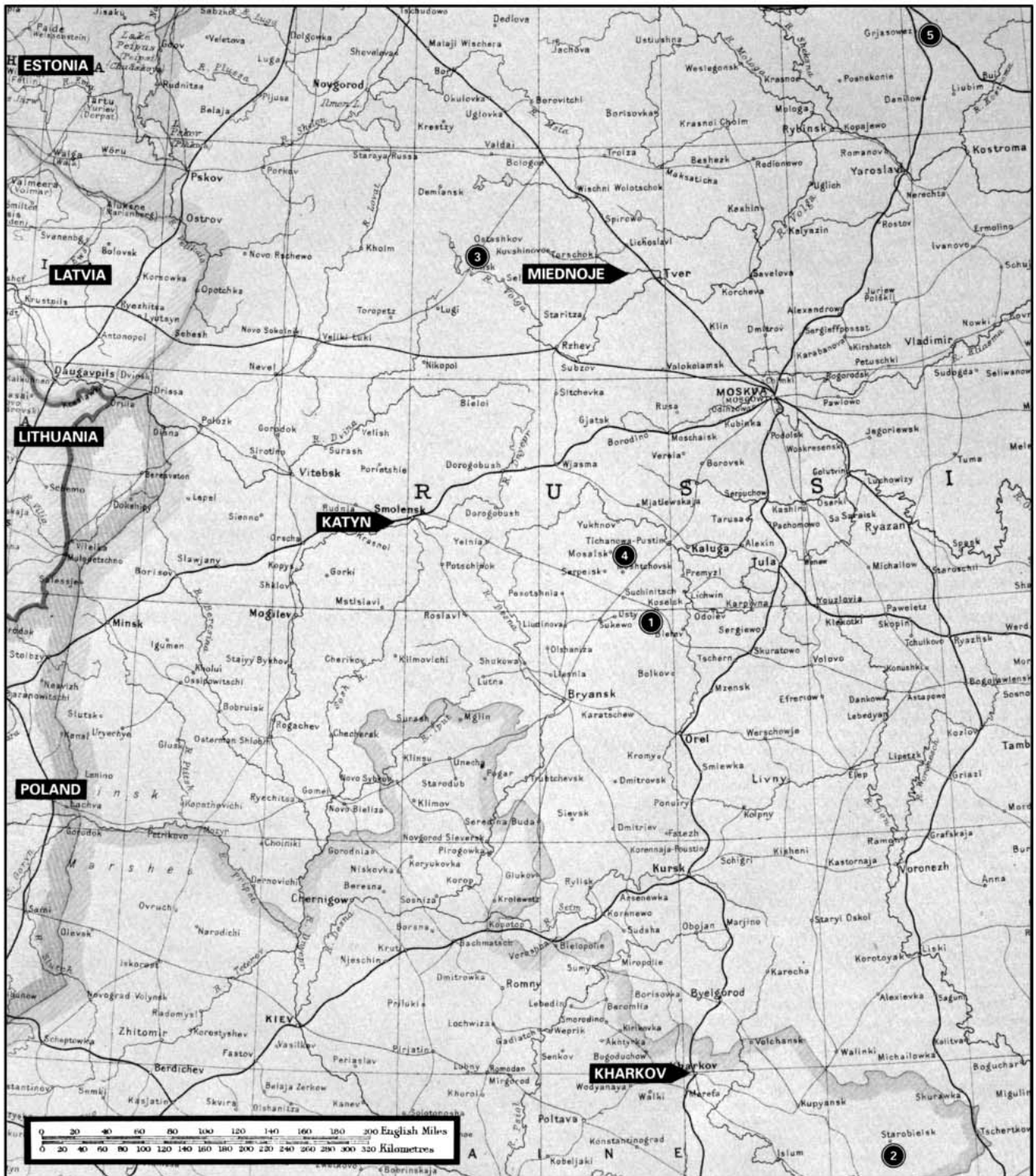
The captured Polish officers were detained in three special camps, which were all located in the western part of the Soviet Union: Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov.

The Kozielsk camp was situated in the grounds of a former Russian-Orthodox monastery, five miles from the Kozielsk railway station on the Smolensk-Briansk line, about 150 miles south-west of Moscow. It consisted of two parts, the monastery and a complex of huts known as the 'Skit', about 600 yards from the monastery and separated from it by woods. After the 1917 revolution, the monastery building had been converted into 'The Gorki Rest Centre for Workers' and the Skit into a 'House for Mothers and Children'. Earmarked as PoW camp in September 1939, the grounds were surrounded by barbed-wire entanglements, machine guns were installed, and guard towers built. By November 1939, Kozielsk accommodated about 4,500 Polish officers and about 100 civilians. Prisoners who originated from territory now occupied by the USSR - about 1,200 in number — were interned in the Skit, and those from territories now under German or Lithuanian rule in the monastery. The two groups were kept completely isolated and communication between them was forbidden.

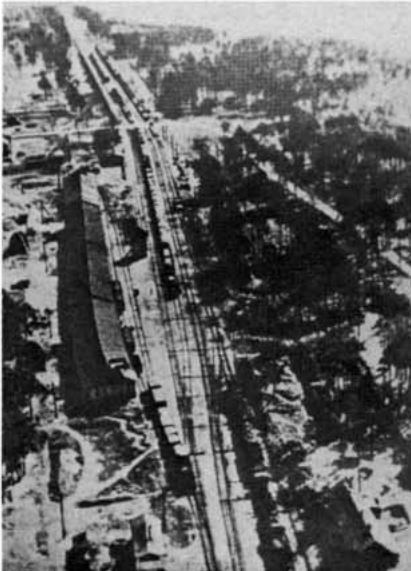
The second camp, Starobielsk, lay some 350 miles south-east of Kozielsk, in the eastern Ukraine, about 130 miles south-east of Kharkov. Like Kozielsk, it was located on the precincts of a desecrated monastery, some 15 acres surrounded by a wall, and comprising two churches — one large, one small — and some ten miscellaneous brick and wooden buildings. First used after the revolution as a transit concentration camp, the buildings had been used as granaries until the arrival of the Polish prisoners. By November 1939, there were some 3,900 Polish officers there, both regular and reserve. Apart from eight generals, there were some 150 colonels and lieutenant-colonels, 230 majors, 1,000 captains, 2,450 1st and 2nd lieutenants, 30 cadet-officers and 52 civilians.

The third camp, Ostashkov, lay 250 miles north-west of Kozielsk. Ostashkov is a provincial town about 120 miles west of Kalinin (Tver) on Lake Seliguer. The Polish camp, again a former monastery, lay some ten miles from the town on a small island on the lake. The island had two names, Ilovaya and Stolobnoye. The monastery buildings were surrounded by a high wooden fence and the island as a whole by barbed wire fencing. From November 1939, the camp held about 6,500 prisoners but, unlike Kozielsk and Starobielsk, this was not an officers' camp. There were only about 400 officers, 300 of whom belonged to the Polish Police militarised when war began. In addition there were officers, NCOs and privates of the Frontier Defence Corps, Intelligence Service, Military Police, State Police and Prison Warder Corps, plus several categories of civilians which the Soviets considered potentially dangerous: several scores of priests, ex-servicemen-settlers, landowners and court magistrates. Apart from work jobs in the camp, the Ostashkov prisoners were put to work building causeways designed to join the lake islands to the mainland.

At the Starobielsk camp [2], in the Ukraine, some 3,900 were detained. (Rada)

The Ostashkov camp [3], on an island on Lake Seliguer, contained some 6,500 officers and men of the Frontier Defence Corps, Intelligence Service, Military Police, State Police and Prison Warder Corps. (Fsmpb)

Between September 1939 and March 1940, the NKVD conducted an intensive screening campaign to filter out those Poles that could possibly be of use to the Soviets. These were sent to a separate camp at Pavlishchev Bor [4], and later to a camp at Griazovietz [5]. The map shows the pre-war border with Poland.

The total number of prisoners detained in these three camps was thus some 15,000. In all three camps, the Soviets started a programme of 're-education'. They bombarded the prisoners with Soviet propaganda, by means of lectures, posters, Soviet newspapers printed in Polish, loud-speaker radio broadcasts, film shows, etc. They also tried to stamp out religious practices among the Poles, forbidding communal evening prayers and arresting chaplains for conducting mass. The Poles proved particularly recalcitrant here and they continued to practice their religious beliefs in secret. To determine which of the prisoners could possibly be of use to the Soviet Union, every prisoner was interrogated, separately, by special teams of the NKVD, the Soviet secret state police. These interviews lasted several hours, and some prisoners were interviewed four of five times. Each prisoner was photographed and his personal dossier was sent to Moscow for evaluation. This screening campaign lasted six months, from October 1939 to March 1940.

Between November 1939 and April 1940, the number of prisoners in the three camps remained virtually unchanged. Only small groups or single individuals were taken away (these included several priests removed on Christmas Eve, 1939). Most of these men disappeared without a trace. Some 448 other men — 245 from Kozielsk, 79 from Starobielsk, and 124 from Ostashkov — were transferred to a new camp at Pavlishchev Bor, situated some 100 miles north-west of Kozielsk. These officers were not given an explanation for their being singled out; possibly the Soviets considered them 'useful material' for further indoctrination. Later, in June 1940, this group of 448 men was transferred to another camp, Griazovietz near Vologda, some 250 miles north of Moscow. They would prove to be the only survivors of the three camps.

Then, in early April 1940, in an operation that had all the signs of being centrally controlled from Moscow, the three camps began to be dissolved. In each camp, groups of 100 to 300 prisoners were called up daily to be despatched in prison trains to an unknown destination. Of the prisoners from Kozielsk, all that became known was that they were off-loaded at Gniezdovo, a small station six miles west of Smolensk, and driven away in prison buses. *Left:* This aerial was taken by the Germans after they had discovered the mass graves in the nearby Katyn wood in 1943. The view is westward. The small road going off to the right from the level crossing leads in a few hundred yards to the Smolensk-Vitebsk highway. Here, the buses with the Polish prisoners turned left towards Katyn wood, only two miles away. *Right:* Today, Gniezdovo station is just another quiet station on the Smolensk-Vitebsk line with nothing to remind a visitor that it once saw prison buses being backed up to train wagons and Polish prisoners step into them surrounded by NKVD guards with fixed bayonets.

In early April 1940, all three camps began to be wound up. As soon as news of the impending dissolution reached the prisoners, rumours were rife as to what would happen to them: many expected that they would be handed over to the Western allies; others that they would be sent back home, i.e. to territories now occupied by Germany, Lithuania or the USSR; the more pessimist ones thought they would simply be transferred to other camps, or handed over to the Germans and interned by them.

Although the camps were located in widely-separated administrative districts, their clearing was evidently based on a single plan, prepared beforehand by the highest Soviet authorities. The disbandment was started simultaneously, and the procedure was the same in each camp. The prisoners were sent away in groups of between 100 and 300 men. The groups were not made up at random, but according to lists of named prisoners. At about 10 a.m., a telephone call would come from Moscow ordering the camp commander to organise a transport for that day and giving the names of the people that were to be included. (This dictating of the name list made these phone calls very long ones.) An NKVD man would then come to a PoW hut and summon a particular person to report to the camp office with his belongings. The same would happen in other huts. Those due to be sent away were collected in one building and given a dinner that was much better than the usual camp meal. (This attempt to create a favourable last impression strengthened the optimists who believed they would be set free or handed over to the Allies.) In addition, every man received a journey ration of 800 grammes of bread, some sugar, and three herrings wrapped in new, unused paper. At Kozielsk, the segregation between the monastery and the Skit prisoners was lifted, which again enhanced optimism.

The groups left more or less regularly, sometimes on successive days, sometimes at intervals of several days, departing in train convoys composed of prison wagons to an unknown destination. At Kozielsk, the first group left on April 3, 1940. It took 21 convoys to empty the camp: April 3, 62 men; April 4, 302 men; April 5, 280 men; April 7, 92 men; April 8, 277 men; April 9, 270 men; April 11, 290 men; April 12, 204 men; April 15, 150 men; April 16, 420 men; April 17, 294 men; April 19, 304 men; April 20, 344 men; April 21, 240 men; April 22, 120 men; April

With Soviet-Polish relations restored after the German attack on Russia in June 1941, the USSR pledged to release all Polish citizens detained on its territory and the Poles began building up a Polish Army in the USSR. However, of the 15,000 prisoners that had been at Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov, only the 448 at Griazovietz could be traced. None of the others reported for duty. The Poles doggedly queried the Soviet government about the missing officers, but only received non-committal answers and vague excuses in reply. On December 3, 1941, having flown to Moscow from London, General Wladyslaw Sikorski, leader of the Polish government-in-exile, handed Stalin a list of 3,845 missing officers whom the Poles had ascertained must still be in the USSR. Although Stalin promised to issue special instructions to find and release them, not one of the 14,500 missing ever surfaced. Pictured at the Kremlin (left to right): Anders, Sikorski, Stalin, Molotov.

What happened to the missing Poles remained a mystery until the Germans disclosed the discovery of the mass graves in Katyn wood in April 1943. The wood lies eight miles west of Smolensk, to the south of the Smolensk-Vitebsk highway, between the villages of Gniezdovo and Katyn. (RIOD)

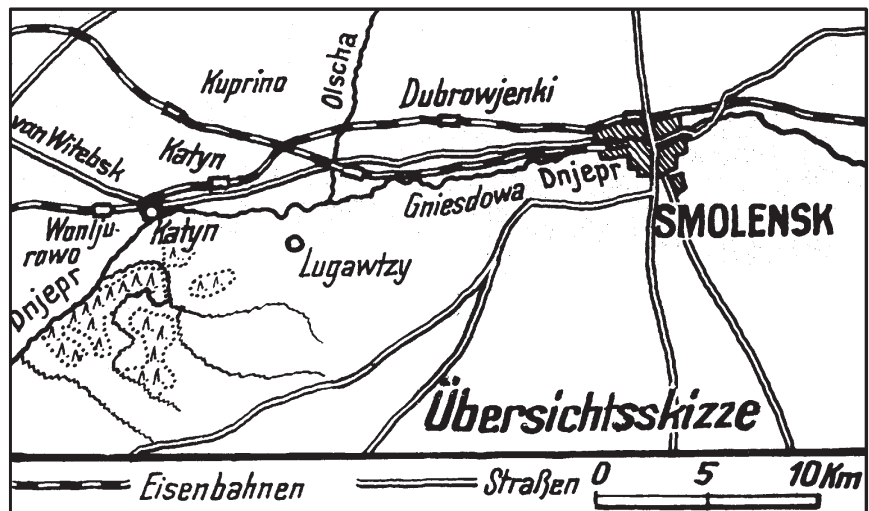
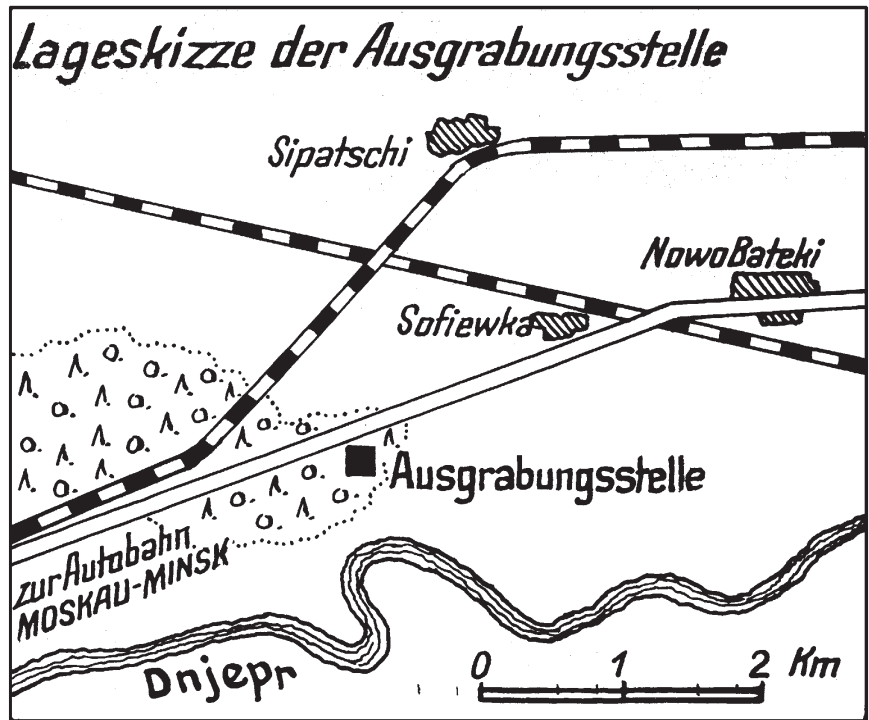
26, 100 men; April 27, 200 men; April 29, 300 men; May 10, 50 men; May 11, 50 men; May 12, 90 men; Total: 4,439 men.

Of these 21 convoys, only two — those of April 26 and May 12 with a total of 190 men — were sent to Pavlishchev Bor. The other 19, with some 4,249 men, disappeared without a trace.

There were only a few clues as to their fate. Lying in the upper bunk of his train waggon, Cadet-Officer Wladyslaw Furtek, one of those fortunate enough to be sent to Pavlishchev Bor on April 26, noticed an inscription apparently left by a member of an earlier convoy: 'We are unloaded two stations beyond Smolensk — transferred into cars'. Another cadet-officer, Wladyslaw Cichy, in the same train but in a different compartment, saw another Polish inscription on the ceiling: 'Detraining at Gniezdovo station'. One man, Lieutenant Stanislaw Swianiewicz (a university professor in civilian life), included in the April 29 convoy, actually reached that station before the NKVD discovered that there had been a mix-up and he was wanted for questioning in Moscow; separated from the group, he managed to secretly observe the others being loaded into closed buses. There all traces ended.

There were even less clues for the other two camps. The evacuation of Starobielsk began on April 5, with trains leaving daily until the 26th. After a pause, the last convoys left between May 8-12. All that was known is that the trains went to Voroshilovgrad and then on to Kharkov. From there, 63 of those shipped on the 25th went to Pavlishchev Bor. Of the remaining 3,900, the trace ended at the Kharkov railway station.

The evacuation of Ostashkov started on April 4. Neither the number of trains it took to empty the camp nor their final destination became known. The trains travelled north, to Bologoje, a distance of about 100 miles, but what happened to the 6,500 prisoners after that remained a total mystery.

Below: **The entrance to the wood lies on the left, a few yards beyond the sign.**

Left: **The track through the wood.** *Right:* **The Polish prisoners were first brought to this 'datcha' (Russian for villa), the summer rest-house for NKVD officers which stood at the far end of the wood overlooking the gorge of the Dnieper river. Here, they were off-loaded from the prison buses and searched for the last time. Then they were led to the execution site, only some 300 metres away, where grave pits had already been dug.**

The liquidation of the three camps took some five to six weeks. By about mid-May, all three had ceased to exist. The prisoners' families, who had remained at home in Poland or were deported to the Soviet Union, received letters from the three camps more or less regularly until the spring of 1940. However, after the disbandment of the camps, this correspondence ceased completely, except in the case of the 448 PoWs transferred to Pavlishchev Bor and, later, to Griazovietz. Some families made enquiries with the Soviet authorities but the answers, if received, were all the same: that the camps had been disbanded and the prisoners in question transferred to an unknown destination. From mid-April 1940, no letter, no postcard, no message of any kind was received by the deadly worried relatives of the 14,500 who were missing. They seemed to have disappeared in thin air.

On June 22, 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Under the new political-military situation, diplomatic relations between the Russia and Poland were resumed. The Polish government-in-exile in London made no special reservation, nor asked for any compensation from the Soviets, but only for a return to the status quo of before the Soviet aggression. And it requested an immediate release of all Polish prisoners held on Soviet territory. This was granted in the Polish-Soviet Agreement which was signed on July 30, 1941, and the Polish-Soviet Military Agreement signed on August 14. From that moment, Polish prisoners-of-war and civilian internees deported from Poland by the Soviets, released from camps and prisons, began to join the Polish units that were being organised on Soviet territory. General Wladyslaw Anders (himself released from Lubianka Prison in Moscow on August 4) was appointed Commander of Polish Forces in the USSR and set up a Polish Army HQ in the USSR

Very soon, however, the members of Anders' headquarters realised that many officers whom they knew personally, and who according to their own most reliable intelligence had been taken prisoner by the Soviets in 1939, were still missing. Among them were nearly all the officers of General Anders' own command group of 1939 and many senior officers. The only ones that could be traced were those who had been transferred to Pavlishchev Bor, and then on to Griazovietz. From them, the Polish authorities learned of the three special camps where some 15,000 had been held, and of the camps' dissolution in April-May 1940.

As early as August 16, at his first official meeting with the Soviet military authorities, General Anders asked about the men from these three camps. The Soviets replied they were unable to answer the question but would try to obtain exact information. This repeated itself at five consecutive meetings.

When queried, the Soviet liaison officers attached to the Polish HQ stated they also were unable to supply any definite information, and repeated the old semi-official story that many Polish officers had been released in 1940 and sent back to Poland. However, letters received from Poland by prisoners who had been at Griazovietz made it clear that the missing men had not returned home.

The Polish HQ in the USSR set up a special department tasked with drawing up a list of the missing officers. These lists were reconstituted with great difficulty from memory by a few former prisoners from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov. At the same time, the Polish authorities ordered the Underground Army in Poland to investigate the Soviet claim that the missing PoWs had been sent home. Their reports confirmed that these officers had definitely not returned home; that they were also not being held in German PoW camps; moreover, that all correspondence with their families had stopped since April-May 1940.

Meanwhile, the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, Professor Stanislaw Kot, made strenuous efforts to get the Soviet government to abide by its pledges to release all Polish citizens, requesting permission to contact those who were still unable to leave their camps, and asking about the where-

Left: **The original building has gone, and a new datcha now occupies the site.** *Right:* **All that remains of the old one.**

abouts of the missing prisoners. Between September 20 and November 12, he had five meetings with the Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Adrei Vyshinsky, at which he brought up the subject. Each time, Vyshinsky only came with vague and non-committal answers, saying that the figures of missing persons quoted by the Poles were incorrect and much too high, or that the matter was being looked into but that administrative problems had caused delays, or repeating the claim that all prisoners had been released. Twice, on September 27 and again on October 13, Kot handed the Soviet government a formal note stating that it was not abiding by its pledges.

On October 22, Kot had a meeting with the Soviet foreign minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, at which he raised the question anew. Molotov replied that all Polish citizens had been released but that owing to a great shortage of transport and administrative difficulties they were still in the places where they had been detained.

it was at the receiving end: 'Stalin here. Have all Poles been released from prison? Because I have with me here the Polish Ambassador who tells me not all have been.' After a few minutes, he received an answering call, but did not say what had been reported. Presumably, it was all an act staged to give the impression that Stalin himself had not been properly informed about, or personally involved in the fate of the Polish prisoners.

Meanwhile, not handicapped by diplomatic protocol, General Anders had approached the NKVD directly. On November 4, he sent a letter in which he estimated the number of missing officers at 8,722, adding the list was not complete. There was no reply.

As a final attempt, General Wladyslaw Sikorski, the Polish Prime Minister and CiC of the Polish Armed Forces, flew from London to Moscow for a personal interview with Stalin. The meeting took place at the Kremlin on December 3, with Anders and Molotov present. Sikorski handed Stalin a name list of 3,845 officers of whom the Poles had ascertained that they were not at home nor in German PoW camps, but must still be in the USSR. Stalin at first suggested they must have escaped, possibly to Manchuria, then repeated the old excuse that some might not yet have made it back from their faraway detention places, and promised that special instructions would be issued to settle this.

The Polish civilian and military authorities at first were prepared to believe the Soviet explanations but, as time went on, they became more and more suspicious. They no longer believed the Soviet excuses, and supposed that the missing PoWs had been sentenced to imprisonment under great hardship in faraway areas such as Novaya Zemlya, Franz Joseph Land, or Kolyma. The Polish government still hoped that if a conciliatory attitude was taken towards the Soviets they would be released, and therefore tried to prevent this question from gaining too much publicity. Nobody in Polish circles suspected that not one of the missing PoWs remained alive.

In January 1942, Anders appointed Captain Josef Czapski (the novelist), who himself had been at Starobielsk, as officer in charge of the search for the missing PoWs. Czapski had meetings with General Nasyedkin, Chief Commander of the GULAG (Directorate of Labour Camps), and with General L.F. Rajchman, Assistant Deputy Head of the NKVD, but again he got nowhere, receiving only vague promises and evasive answers.

In these circumstances, the Poles decided further requests were pointless, and that there was no other alternative but to wait until the summer, when transport conditions in the north and east would improve, and meanwhile to carry on the search throughout the USSR. However, the Soviets were now actively obstructing the search, their censor prohibiting the families of missing persons from publishing their names in *Polska*, the official journal of the Polish Embassy in the USSR.

On March 18, General Anders and his chief-of-staff, Colonel Leopold Okulicki, had another audience with Stalin and Molotov, at which he handed over two lists containing 800 additional names of missing officers, offering them as instruments to help the Soviets in their search. Stalin said he did not know where the missing men were. 'It may be that they were in camps in territories which have been taken over by the Germans and came to be dispersed', he said. This was the first mention of what later became the official Soviet version of the fate of the disappeared Polish PoWs.

Contrary to hopes, the summer of 1942 passed without any of the missing persons surfacing. When the Polish Forces in the USSR left for the Middle East in the autumn, new rumours sprang up that they were still in the arctic northern regions. On October 19, the Polish Defence Minister in London, Lieutenant-General Marian Kukiel, referred to these new rumours in a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador, Bogomolov. At this, the latter suddenly broke off the conversation looking so 'disturbingly helpless' that an alarmed and worried Kukiel concluded that Bogomolov knew they had all perished.

The earliest known photograph, taken sometime in 1942, of the Katyn mass graves marked with a simple birchwood cross. (Fsmpb)

On November 1, Kot handed Molotov yet another note about the prisoners, and on November 3, at a Polish request, the British government queried the Soviet authorities on the same matter. This precipitated a note sent by Molotov on November 8 which declared that all Polish citizens in Soviet custody had now been released. A note delivered by Alexander Bogomolov, the Soviet Ambassador to the Polish government in London, on November 14 specifically added that all Polish officers detained on USSR territory had also been released and that the Polish assumption that they were still somewhere in the northern areas was based on inaccurate information.

Eventually, after three and a half months of vain attempts to find the missing men, Kot was able on November 14 to obtain an audience with Stalin. Molotov was also present. In answer to Kot's queries, Stalin too said that all Poles had been released, suggesting the missing ones had gone to Rumania. In the course of the interview, Stalin picked up a phone, requested to be put through to the NKVD, and said to whoever

At 2.15 p.m. on April 13, 1943, Radio Berlin broadcast the following news: 'A report has reached us from Smolensk to the effect that the local inhabitants have mentioned to the German authorities the existence of a place where mass executions had been carried out by the Bolsheviks and where 10,000 Polish officers had been murdered by the GPU [the predecessor of the

Of course, no pictures exist of the actual executions, and the photographic evidence is that taken by the Germans when they discovered the murder site in 1943. Kriegsberichter Neubauer was present throughout the excavations and most German pictures of Katyn are by him. The first grave to be opened was also the largest and, because of its characteristic shape, became known as the 'L' grave. The Germans used Russian labourers for the actual digging. Here, they have just started on what will shortly become the long leg of the 'L' grave. A few of the small fir trees, which the NKVD executioners had planted on the graves to camouflage them, can still be seen. (RIOD)

Left: **The same spot (compare the trees in the background) later on. The first layers of corpses have been laid bare. (RIOD)** *Above:* **Over 50 years later, the 'L' grave is still an open spot in the wood. When Karel visited the wood in November 1995, he found the various original graves conveniently marked out with plastic tape (left by the Polish Red Cross the previous autumn), something which made comparisons relatively easy. The Polish Cemetery and Memorial is just over the top of the slope.**

Found buried with the corpses in the 'L' grave was a wooden ladder *(right)*, very likely the one used by the NKVD murderers to get in and out of the pit. (RIOD)

NKVD]. The German authorities accordingly went to a place called Kosygory [i.e. 'Goats Hill' — a small hill inside the Katyn Wood], a Soviet summer rest resort situated 12 kilometres west of Smolensk, where a terrible discovery was made. A ditch was found, 28 metres long and 16 metres wide, in which the bodies of about 3,000 Polish officers were piled up in 12 layers. They were fully dressed in military uniforms, some were bound, and all had pistol shot wounds in the back of their heads. There will be no difficulty in identifying the bodies as, owing to the nature of the ground, they are in a state of mummification and the Bolsheviks have left on the bodies their personal documents. It has been stated today that General Smorawinski from Lublin has been found amongst the murdered officers. Previously, these officers were in a camp at Kozielsk near Orel and in February and March, 1940, were brought in cattle wagons to Smolensk. Thence they were taken in lorries to Kosygory and were murdered there by the Bolsheviks. The search for further pits is in progress. New layers may be found under those already discovered. It is estimated that the total number of officers killed amounts to 10,000, which would correspond to the entire cadre of Polish officers taken prisoner by the Bolsheviks. The correspondents of Norwegian newspapers, who were on the spot and were thus able to obtain direct evidence of the crime, immediately sent their despatches to their papers in Oslo.'

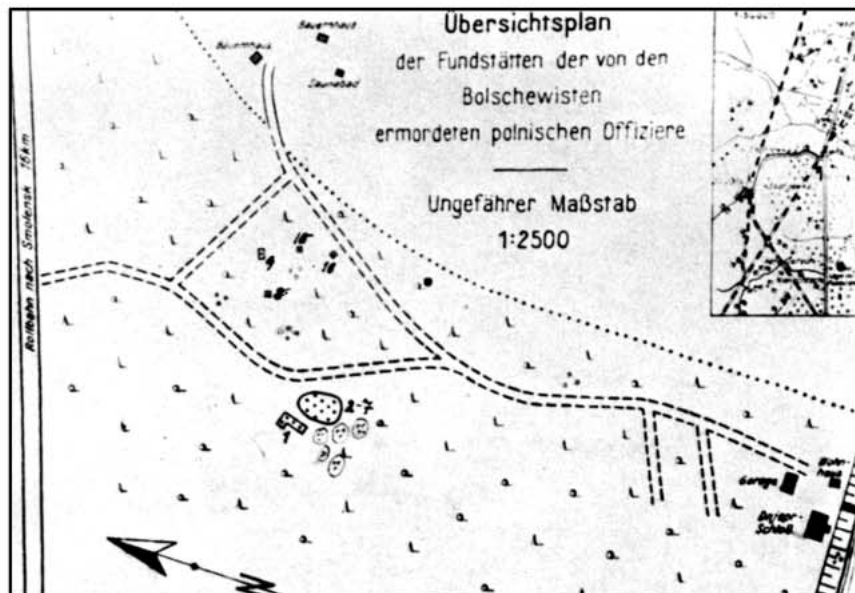
The Germans followed up this first announcement with additional bulletins. Seizing the golden opportunity, they launched a violent propaganda offensive, exploiting the Polish tragedy for their own political aims. Every day, new details were released in countless communiques, reports and newspaper articles.

The story that surfaced was as follows. In the summer of 1942, several Poles from labour units attached to the German Army, who were billeted in railway wagons near the railway junction of Brecavo Mosta (two miles from Katyn), as well as some civilians who had escaped from Soviet captivity, learned from the local population that Poles had been shot by the Russians in the region of Smolensk. The Poles were told that their compatriots were probably buried in Katyn forest, to the right of the track leading from the Smolensk-Vitebsk highway to an NKVD summer rest-house (datcha) in the woods. A group of ten Poles from the labour units thereupon excavated a mound which obviously did not harmonise with the surrounding country, and soon came upon the body of a Polish officer in uniform. At first, they did not realise they had found a mass grave. Since the unit to which they belonged moved elsewhere, the search was discontinued, but before they left, the Poles erected two birchwood crosses on the grave.

It was not until early February, 1943, that the news about the Polish graves in the Katyn forest reached the German authorities. The man to tell them was a local kolkhoz farm hand, Ivan Krivorzhertzov. Sekretär Ludwig Voss of the Gruppe Geheime Feldpolizei 570 (a Secret Field Police unit belonging to Heeresgruppe Mitte) was appointed to lead the investigation. Preliminary excavations, carried out during the February frost, proved the existence of mass graves. At the same time, Voss began collecting sworn evidence of numerous witnesses: local peasants, kolkhoz labourers, railway workers. On March 1, the Germans charged Professor Dr Gerhard Buhtz, Professor for Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Breslau (Wroclaw) University and legal doctor with Heeresgruppe Mitte, with the forensic medical investigations. Systematic and large-scale excavations were then started on March 29. Little by little the appalling scope of the mass murder was revealed.

The long leg of the 'L' grave as seen from the top of the slope — then and now. (BA)

As the witness statements made clear, Kosygory Hill in Katyn forest had since 1918 been used as a place of execution by the Soviet secret police: first the Cheka, then the GPU, then the NKVD. In 1931, the area had been surrounded by a barbed-wire fence, and special signs had been put up warning the population not to enter. Around that time, the NKVD datcha had been built in the wood. From 1940 on, the site had also been guarded by sentries and watch-dogs.

The witnesses also described how between March and May 1940, trains, consisting of three to four carriages with gratings over the windows, had arrived almost daily at Gniezdovo station, six miles west from Smolensk and two miles east of the forest, bringing loads of between 100 and 300 prisoners-of-war in Polish uniforms. Their personal belongings would be taken from them and be thrown on lorries while the prisoners themselves would be put into three prison buses and driven towards the NKVD rest-house in Katyn forest. The buses were of a closed type especially adapted for transporting prisoners. A narrow corridor ran up the centre, on both sides of which were many low and narrow doors. When a prisoner stepped into the corridor, an NKVD man ordered him to step backwards into one of the cabins which were unlit and so small the prisoners had to crouch. These were the 'tshorni voron' (black raven) so well known to Soviet citizens. Sometimes, the buses repeated the journey between Gniezdovo station and the NKVD rest-house ten times a day. One witness, Parfeon Kisselev, a 72-year-old peasant who lived on the edge of the forest, described how, during the weeks in the spring of 1940 when the buses with prisoners had arrived, he had heard shots and shouts from his house. Later, in 1942, Polish workmen had come to his house and asked him to show them the place where the Polish officers were said to have been buried and to lend them a pick and shovel.

The precise site inside the Katyn Forest was known as Kosygory (also spelled as 'Kozie Gory' or 'Kosogory'), or 'Goats Hill'. Seven of the execution pits were grouped close together, on the south-western slope of a small sandy hill next to the track leading to the NKVD datcha. This sketch comes from the official German report on Katyn. It specifies the 'L' grave, but not the other graves, Nos. 2 to 7 (compare this sketch with the one on page 33). The dotted line indicates the wire fence erected by the NKVD to close off the wood. One of the prime Russian witnesses, Parfeon Kisselev, lived in one of the cottages (Bauernhaus) just outside the fence. (RIOD)

The German announcement about the mass graves at Katyn made a tremendous impression and caused deep dismay in Polish circles. However, the rest of the world, who knew nothing about the Poles missing in Russia or the Polish behind-the-scene attempts to find them, found it hard to believe. Many thought it was just another German propaganda stunt designed to turn opinion against Germany's largest enemy.

On April 15, Radio Moscow broadcast a vehement negation of the 'vile fabrications' made against the USSR which it said served only to cover up the fact that the Germans themselves had murdered the Polish prisoners who — so the report claimed — 'in 1941

The grave area pictured from the air at the beginning of the excavations. The 'L' grave (centre right) and grave No. 2 (upper right) have been opened, and hundreds of corpses taken from them are laid out for identification. Graves Nos. 3 to 7 have not yet been opened, located as they are between grave No. 2 and the narrow strip of bodies. The square pit on the left is not an original grave, but one dug by the Germans for reburial of the victims.

were engaged in construction work in areas west of the Smolensk region and who fell into the hands of the German-Fascist hangmen in the summer of 1941'. Since Kosygory lies near Gniezdovo, where before the war archaeological excavations had taken place, the Russians tried to suggest that the graves found were in fact the 'excavations of the historic Gniezdovo burial place'. The BBC bulletin broadcast on the 15th flatly accepted the Soviet denial, and spoke of 'German lies'.

Realising the free world would be hesitant to accept the German revelations at face value, Germany sought a neutral and competent international body to confirm her findings. On April 16, the German Red Cross requested the International Red Cross (IRC) in Geneva to send a delegation to participate in the investigation on the spot.

In London, the Polish government was in a difficult position: it knew that both the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships were capable of the crime, but the overwhelming evidence pointed to the murders having been committed by its nominal ally, the Soviet Union. Next day, April 17, the Polish government, too, instructed its representative in Switzerland, Prince Stanislaw Radziwill, to request the IRC to send a delegation to Katyn to investigate the German revelations. The move, though understandable from a human standpoint, was a political mistake: generally seen as endangering the anti-German coalition, it fell badly with the Western allies and cost the Poles much goodwill.

Since similar proposals had now come from two parties between whom a state of war existed, according to the rules laid down by the IRC, the matter would have to be put before its Executive Council, a special session of which was announced for April 20. However, before that took place, and also as a result of Soviet opposition, the IRC changed its mind. The IRC rule of September 12, 1939, stipulated that the IRC could only take part in an investigation of this kind if all interested parties agreed to it. The IRC therefore suggested to the German Red Cross and the Polish government to endeavour to obtain the consent of the USSR, either directly or through an intermediary.

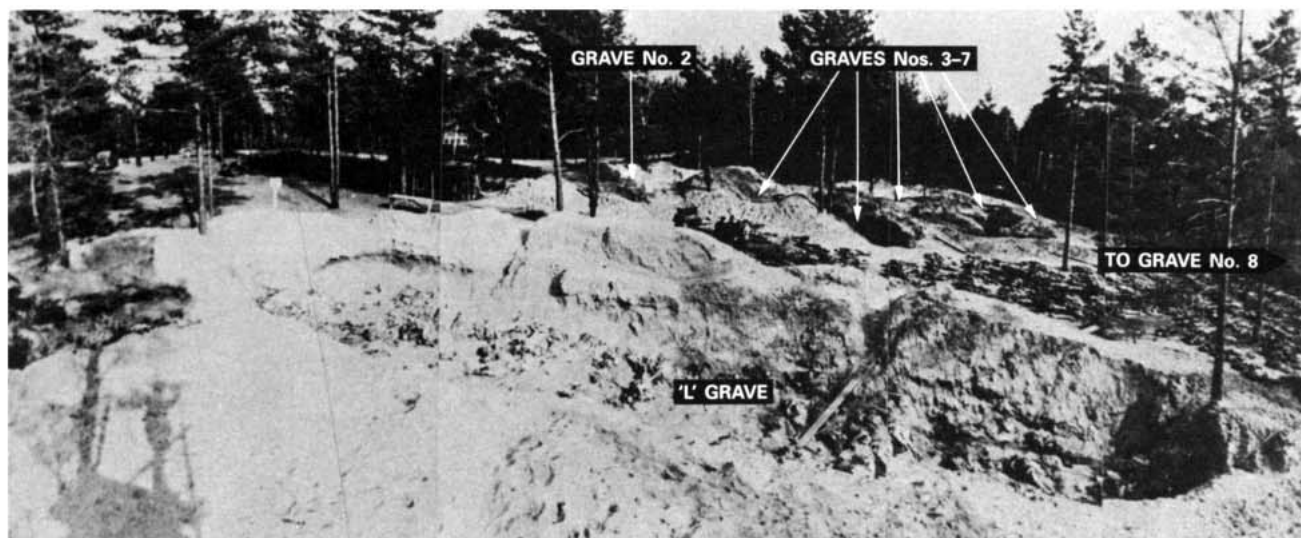
The Poles had already sent the Soviets a note on April 20. Since, according to their communique of the 15th, the Soviets now suddenly seemed to know for certain that the missing PoWs had been captured by the Germans in 1941, the Poles asked them for detailed and precise information that could corroborate this. There was no reply.

Instead of consenting to an independent international inquiry, the USSR now began attacking the Polish government for 'collaborating' with Nazi Germany. On the night of April 25/26, the Polish Ambassador was summoned to the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, where Molotov read out a note expressing Soviet indignation over the Polish behaviour, behind which they suspected a Polish scheme to wrest territorial concessions from the USSR, and announcing the Soviet Union's immediate severance of all relations with the Polish government. (Shortly before, the Soviets had set up a 'Polish Committee' in Moscow made up of Polish communists, and this they now recognised as representing Poland.) This action by the USSR surprised public opinion in the West and revived fears that Russia might make a separate peace with Germany. Worried that the unity of the Allies was threatened, the British government immediately tried to appease both parties. The Soviet Union, however, persisted in its stand.

The Soviet reaction, both its refusal to consent to an IRC investigation and its cutting of relations with Poland, was not lost on the world. Many who at first had been sceptic about the German revelations, discarding it as propaganda, now began to have second thoughts.

The sand heaps around the 'L' grave can be seen in the back, with the wooden platform tower used as a vantage point by the German propaganda cameramen beyond. In the foreground, excavation work has just started.

The same view a few days later. The excavations have uncovered graves Nos. 3 to 7, and corpses cover the strip of open ground sloping down to the marshy area. To make sure that no graves are missed, connecting trenches have been dug between the various pits. (BA)

Looking down the slope today, with the contours of the original graves marked out by plastic ribbon tied to small pegs. Grave No. 3 in the foreground, with Nos. 4 and 5 behind it on the right, and Nos. 6 and 7 on the far left.

In this panorama picture, taken some time later from the tower (its shadow is visible in the lower left corner), the 'L' grave is in the foreground, with grave No. 2 behind. Graves Nos. 3 to 7 have now been excavated as well, and the slope down to the marshy area on the right is wholly filled with corpses recovered from them. In the upper left, the track to the NKVD rest-house can be seen running along the crest. Staff cars are parked alongside the path. (RIOD)

Meanwhile, the excavations in Katyn forest continued. To confirm the fact that Kosygory Hill had already been used for executions before the war by the GPU and its predecessor, the Cheka, the Germans carried out several experimental excavations. In the wooded area to the north-east of the Polish graves, on the opposite site of the track to the NKVD house, and also in the woods to the south, several graves were discovered containing bodies of Russian civilians of both sexes who, without exception, had been killed by a neck shot. Many had their hands tied behind their backs. From documents found, it appeared they were prisoners from the NKVD jail in Smolensk, the majority being political prisoners. Their state of decomposition varied but in all cases was such that they must have lain buried for many years.

The main excavations, however, concentrated on the Polish mass graves. By late April, seven separate grave pits had been laid bare. They covered a relatively small area in a clearing in the wood and were all on the south-western side of a small sandy hill sloping down to a marshy area. They were fairly easily recognisable because of the young fir trees which had been planted on top of them.

Grave No. 1, also known as the 'L-shaped grave', was the largest. Its longer arm, sloping down to the south-west, was 26 metres long and 5,5 metres wide, the shorter left-hook arm measured 16 by 8 metres. It contained 12 layers of corpses, each layer made up of about 250 bodies, making a total of some 3,000 dead. It was the only grave where traces of quicklime were found.

Grave No. 2, some 20 metres south-east of No. 1, was angled north-west and measured 20 by 5 metres. The pit was divided into three sections separated by earth walls of 1-1.4 metres thickness, which indicated that it had been dug in three phases. Like No. 1, it contained 12 layers of corpses.

The other graves were much smaller. Grave No. 3, to the south-west of No. 2, was 6 by 3.5 metres.

No. 4, a little further down to the south-west, was of the same size, 6 by 3.5 metres.

No. 5, next to No. 4, was only 4.5 by 3 metres. Lowest down of all pits and close to the marshy area, it filled with ground water soon after opening, and this considerably hampered recovery of the corpses from it. It contained three layers of bodies. The flooding was an indication that the original grave had been dug in a dry season.

Grave No. 6 lay to the south-east next to No. 4, and measured 12 by 4 metres.

Finally, Grave No. 7, adjacent to No. 6 but further down, was 9 by 3.5 metres.

The total grave area added up to some 478 square metres. The depth of the various graves was between 1.85 and 3.30 metres. The central sector of the longer arm of the L-shaped grave was the deepest place. The differences in the depth were caused by the various levels of the bottoms of the graves, which stepped down in terraces to the marshy lowland. Average depth was about 2.3 metres. As a rule the graves were filled with bodies up to within 1.5 metres of the surface. By April 26, some 900 bodies had been exhumed of which some 600 had been identified.

The exhumations were well organised. The actual grave-digging was done by 35 Russian civilian workmen recruited locally. The autopsies and identifications were done by Dr Buhtz and his specially trained, 13-strong team of doctors, analysts, autopsy assistants and photo lab workers. Polizeisekretär Voss had arranged for stretchers, autopsy tables, surgical instruments and a water cart to be brought to the site. A wooden shed in a nearby village was taken down and rebuilt next to the graves, fitted with a stove and roof windows to serve as all-temperature autopsy room where frozen corpses could be macerated. The Wehrmacht field laboratory at Smolensk was available for laboratory tests. Responsible for cordoning off the site, the Feldpolizei was assisted by Polish policemen and Russian auxiliary guards. Seven Russian auxiliaries guarded the site at night. Oberleutnant Gregor Slowenczik was in charge of political propaganda.

Taken from a lower standpoint, the comparison shows how close the present-day Polish Cemetery is to the tip of the 'L' grave.

Sensing a golden opportunity for their anti-soviet propaganda, the Germans brought numerous groups from all over Europe to Katyn to inspect the murder site. *Above:* One of the first to arrive, on April 11, was a Polish delegation from Warsaw and Cracow, which included journalists, doctors and members of the Polish Mutual Relief Organisation RGO. Here they watch a corpse being recovered from grave No. 7. This picture was taken just to the left of the two pictures shown on page 11 — the two trees in the upper left form the link. Note the cameraman in the left foreground recording the scene on film. (RIOD) *Right:* In our comparison, posts marking grave No. 7 can be seen in the foreground with Nos. 6 and 3 behind. *Below left:* Members of the Polish delegation are shown a uniform jacket to authenticate that it is really Polish. (RIOD) *Below right:* The former Polish prime minister, Leon Kozlowski (who visited Katyn with a later delegation), is shown papers identifying the corpse on the autopsy table.

Left: **The very first group to visit Katyn, on April 10, was one of eight foreign journalists: Mr Jaederlund of the Swedish *Stockholms Tidningen*, Mr Schnetzer of the Swiss Bund, Mr Sanchez of the Spanish *Informaciones*, Mr Myklebust of the Norwegian Telegraph Agency, Mr Stoffels of the Dutch *De Telegraaf*, Mr van der Maele of the Belgian *Nouveau Journal*, Mr Szabolcz of the Hungarian *Esti Ujsag*, and Mr Mikasinovic of the Serbian *Novo Vreme*. They were accompanied by two Reichskanzlei press officials, Herr Schippert and Herr Lassler, and by Major Rudolf-Christoph von Gersdorff, chief intelligence officer of Heeresgruppe Mitte (the army group in whose rear area Katyn lay).** *Right:* **Dr Gerhard Buhtz, in charge of the forensic investigations at the murder site, guides the pressmen in their inspection of the graves. In civilian life professor for forensic medicine and criminology at Breslau University, Buhtz was also the chief legal doctor with Heeresgruppe Mitte. (RIOD)**

To fully exploit the propaganda possibilities offered by Katyn, the Germans brought numerous groups to the murder site. All these visitors were allowed to freely investigate the graves that had already been opened, to examine documents found on the bodies, and to interrogate local people. Two of the groups were brought to the site even before the German announcement of April 13. The first,

Left: **Another all-Polish delegation arrived on April 16. Most of its members were representatives of the Polish Red Cross: Dr A. Szebesta, Dr T. Susz-Praglowski, Dr H. Bartoszewski, S. Klapert, K. J. Skarzynski, L. Rojkiewicz, J. Wodzinowski, S. Kolodziejski, Z. Pohowski and R. Banach. Also included in the delegation was a press editor, Marjan Mertens, and the Rev. Father Stanislas Jasinski, Canon of Cracow and confidential emissary of the Archbishop of Cracow (on far right). (RIOD)** *Right:* **Shattered and overcome by the horror all around him, Father Jasinski sits down on the edge of the massacre area.**

A display of exhibits found on the corpses was set up on the verandah of a house near Katyn wood. Here, Sekretär (a rank equalling Leutnant) Ludwig Voss, the Geheime Feldpolizei officer in overall charge of the Katyn investigation, shows the Polish delegates some of the items recovered. The house in question stood at Gruszczenka, a village located about two miles east of Kosygory and forming with Nove Batioki, Gniezdovo and Zylki the Katyn Rural District. The building was actually the HQ and billets of Voss' unit, Gruppe Geheime Feldpolizei 570. This unit's normal task was to provide security for the headquarters of Generalfeldmarschall Günther von Kluge, the commander of Heeresgruppe Mitte, which was located just west of Smolensk. When Voss discovered the mass graves, so close to the army group CP, Major von Gersdorff ordered him to drop all other work and undertake a full inquiry into the matter. The Berlin Propaganda Ministry assigned Oberleutnant Gregor Slowenczik of Propaganda-Abteilung W to see to it that the massacre was properly publicised. (RIOD)

on April 10, was a delegation of eight foreign journalists from Berlin, mostly from German-occupied countries but also correspondents from Sweden, Switzerland and Spain. On April 11, the first Polish delegation arrived, which included journalists, doctors and members of the Polish Mutual Relief Organisation (RGO) from Cracow and Warsaw. On April 16, a second Polish delegation arrived, mostly doctors and delegates of the Polish Red Cross from Warsaw. With them was the Rev. Father Stanislas Jasinski, Canon of Cracow and confidential emissary of the Archbishop of Cracow, who conducted memorial prayers at the edge of the graves. Next day, April 17, a group of Polish officers from German PoW camps was brought to Katyn to yet again inspect the graves.

Left: **The Germans allowed the visitors to freely interrogate the Russian witnesses they had found. Here, the Polish Red Cross delegates interview Parfeon Kisselev, the aged peasant who lived on the edge of the wood and had heard the shouts and shots of the executions in 1940.** *Right:* **Father Jasinski and other delegates listen as Kisselev recounts his story to the Secretary General of the Polish Red Cross, Kasimierz Skarzynski. Picture by PK-Kriegsberichter Collmer. (RIOD)**

Canon Jasinski leads the Polish delegates in mourning prayers at the edge of the 'L' grave.

Left: **The Polish Red Cross delegates look on as Dr Buhtz and an assistant conduct another autopsy at the edge of the 'L' grave.** (RIOD) *Right:* **Fifty-two years later, the same tree still overlooks the site of grave No. 1.**

Left: **A few days later, yet another delegation arrived, this time composed of writers and artists from European countries. Here they stand at the bend of the 'L' grave.** *Above:* **Plastic ribbon and pegs mark the contours of the 'L' grave in November 1995.**

Two members of the writers' and artists' delegation wander among the corpses laid out on the lower slope. Higher up is the distinctive sand heap of the 'L' grave. (BA)

Normally, snow always spoils a good comparison but, in this case, it proved a blessing in disguise, the white blanket giving perspective in the otherwise dark wood.

Large numbers of victims were found neatly stacked with face down, which could mean either that they had been forced to lie down on top of their dead comrades before being shot, or that they had been arranged that way after being killed, either in the pit or outside.

The weight of the bodies, topped by five feet of earth, had completely flattened the corpses into a tightly-pressed mass, clotted together by putrefaction. In one grave, nine layers were found to be so compressed as to measure only 30 inches high: strong proof that the bodies were still in their original grave.

A 'Technical Commission' of the Polish Red Cross, initially led by Ludwik Rojkiewicz, stayed on to assist the Germans with the exhumations, their special task being to identify the bodies, make nominal rolls and inform the next-of-kin. They also conducted their own investigation.

Each exhumed body was given a serial number (stamped on a metal disc which was attached to the victim's clothing) and then searched for documents. Papers and personal effects were put in special paper bags marked with the same serial number.

The bodies were in various stages of decay. In a few cases, notably at the top and at the sides of the graves, mummification of the uncovered parts of bodies had taken place, but elsewhere and with bodies nearer the centre a humid process had taken place. Adjacent bodies were stuck together with a thick putrid liquid, as if glued to one another. Moreover, the weight of the mass of bodies had completely flattened those in the lower layers. The grave workers had great difficulty wrenching the corpses out, having to wedge each body carefully and then tear it away from the others.

Right: **Each body was carefully searched for papers and personal effects. (RIOD)**

Left: **The body of Brigadier-General Mieczyslaw Smorawinski was one of the first to be identified by the Germans. He and other high-ranking officers had left Kozielsk camp with the April 7 transport. He was found in the 'L' grave with the bullet still lodged in his forehead. Because of his high rank, Smorawinski was entered No. 1 in the official German list of victims.**

2948

[illegible] INSPEKTOR SIŁ ZBROJ[illegible]

[illegible] ORDERU WOJENNEGO

„VIRTUTI MILITARI"

Mieczysław Smorawiński

JEST KAWALEREM KRZYŻA SREBRNEGO ORDERU WOJENNEGO „VIRTUTI MILITARI"

SZEF [illegible] KAPITUŁY

Right: **Found on the general was his certificate for the Virtuti Militari (the Polish equivalent of the Victoria Cross). The decoration itself is prominent on his chest. Behind is a second general, Brigadier-General Bronislaw Bohatyrewicz. He had left Kozielsk in the same convoy as Smorawinski and was found in the same pit. He became No. 2 on the German list. (RIOD)**

Left: **Although not all victims could be given a name, there could be no doubt that they were Polish officers. The 'SP' on the shoulder badge identified this victim as a major of the Officer Cadet School (not the Josef Pilsudski Brigade as the Germans thought).** *Right:* **The Sam Browne marked this victim as a soldier of officer rank.**

The uniforms left no doubt that the victims were Polish officers. Supporting this were Polish eagles on the buttons, badges of rank, awards and medals, regimental badges, Polish type long boots, field caps, belts with field flasks, aluminium cups, and markings on the linen.

In order to counter the theory, widely disseminated by Soviet propaganda, that the bodies had been dressed in Polish uniforms after their execution, the Germans took special care to prove that the clothes were the victims' own: the uniforms were well cut and a good fit; the boots fitted well too; often, personal monograms were found on the underclothing; uniforms and underclothing were well-buttoned, braces and belts in good order.

The bodies were thus undoubtedly Polish. Moreover, from identity cards, birth certificates, award certificates and personal correspondence (letters, postcards, photographs) found on the bodies, many could be identified by name, age and/or profession. Only very few valuables, like wedding rings or gold coins, were found in the victims' pockets (these had been taken away in the camps) but crosses, gold chains, etc. were found under the shirts and, in many cases, considerable sums in zloty banknotes (no longer in circulation and thus of no value to the Soviets) were found, often sewn into the legs of the boots. In many instances, wooden, handmade cigarette cases were found, together with partly-filled tobacco pouches and cigarette holders — many of these engraved with monograms, inscriptions, the dates '1939' or '1940', or the name 'Kozielsk'.

There were several clues as to the time of execution. Letters and postcards with posts-office stamps from the German-occupied and Soviet-occupied zones of Poland pointed to a time after September 1939. All bodies wore winter clothing, mostly military greatcoats, leather or fur jerkins, pullovers and sweaters. No insects were found in the graves, which pointed to execution and burial in a cool season. Various Russian and Polish newspapers were found on the bodies, all dating from March or the first half of April, 1940.

A very important clue were the young fir trees which had been planted on the graves. Senior forestry inspector Fritz von Herff, who had been summoned as an expert, stated as his opinion that the trees were at least five years old, rather stunted owing to their being in the shade of older trees, and had been planted in that area three years ago, i.e. in 1940. This was confirmed by microscopic analysis of the tree trunks.

From the translation of diaries (in all, 22 diaries were found), memoirs and other notes found on the bodies, it was proved that the victims had all been taken prisoner by the Soviet Army in 1939, been detained at various PoW camps, and had all been at the Kozielsk camp. From Kozielsk, the prisoners were sent in trains directly to Gniezdovo, where they arrived in early morning, thence transported in special buses to Katyn forest. Off-loaded at the NKVD rest-house, they were brought to previously dug graves and immediately shot.

One diary, that of Major Adam Solski (victim No. 490), whose train arrived at Gniezdovo early on April 9, contained entries made during the last hour of his life: 'Departure in prison bus in cells. Terrible. Taken somewhere into a wood, something like a country house. Here a special search. I was relieved of my watch, pointing to 6.30 a.m. (4.30 a.m. Polish time), asked about a wedding ring. Roubles, belt and pocket knife taken away . . .' Here the diary ended.

A great many victims still had their army identification discs. *Below left:* **The dog-tag of 1st Lieutenant Zbigniew Florkiewicz, born at Lublin in 1905.** *Below right:* **Florkiewicz's ID with portrait photo was also found. The papers found on the victims were often glued together and made illegible by the bodily fluids, but the Germans managed to separate the papers with xylol or paraffin ether, then chloroform, and to improve legibility by using ultra lamps and infra-red photography. (RIOD)**

POSTANOWIENIA ODNOŚNIE ODZNAKI CZŁONKOWSKIEJ ZWIĄZKU.

1. Odznaką członkowską Związku, zatwierdzoną Dziennikiem Rozkazów M. S. Wojsk. № 9 pkt. 89 z 1926 r. jest czteroramienny krzyż orderu „VIRTUTI MILITARI".

2. Odznaka członkowska Związku jest zewnętrznym dowodem przynależności do stanu oficerskiego w rezerwie. Jest ona ponadto wyrazem łączności członków Związku, ich koleżeńskości i solidarności, nosić ją należy z dumą rycerską i godnością.

3. Każda odznaka posiada numer na odwrotnej stronie odznaki. Numer odznaki winien być także uwidoczniony na legitymacji i deklaracji członkowskiej.

4. Odznakę członkowską obowiązany jest posiadać każdy zwyczajny członek Związku.

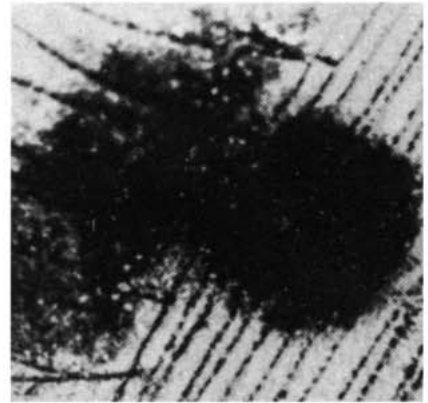
5. Członkowie zwyczaini obowiązani są o ile możności nosić stale odznakę Związku i wzajemnie pozdrawiać się.

6. Odznakę członkowską nosić należy na lewej klapie w butonierce.

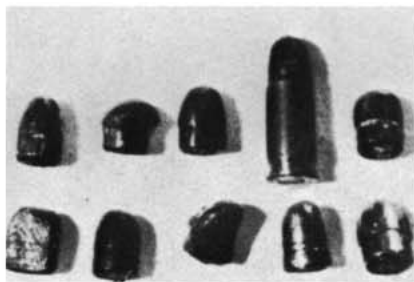
7. W razie wystąpienia członka ze Związku Oficerów Rezerwy obowiązany jest on zwrócić nabytą odznakę wraz z legitymacją odnośnemu Zarządowi Związku za zwrotem 50 proc. należytości za odznakę.

8. Członek honorowy ma prawo posiadać odznakę członkowską.

9. W wypadku zgubienia odznaki względnie legitymacji członkowskiej obowiązany jest

Left: **Without exception, the victims had been killed by a pistol shot in the back of the head. (RIOD)** *Centre:* **Skin pulled back from the forehead shows the bullet embedded in front of the skull.** *Right:* **A large number of victims had been shot through the raised-up collars of their greatcoats. Infra-red photography of the collars showed up traces of gunpowder which proved that the neck shots had been fired from very close distance. This victim (No. 3720) was identified as Marian Jankiewicz.**

In graves Nos. 1, 2 and 4, some bodies lay side by side or neatly stacked on top of each other, but elsewhere they were in a complete tangle. The question whether the prisoners had been shot in the grave pits, either lying down or standing up, or outside the graves could not be positively answered either way. From the position of the bodies, it was assumed the majority was shot outside the graves, and then thrown in.

Without exception, all victims were killed by a shot in the back of the head, the bullet entering below the protrusion on the back of the skull and exiting in the forehead above the eye. A few victims had a double neck shot; two had been shot three times. In many instances, the bullet had been fired through the raised-up collar of the greatcoat. In many cases, it had not left the skull, or was found lodged between the forehead and the inside of the cap. Apart from one 6.35mm bullet found in grave No. 1, all bullets were of 7.65mm calibre. A number of spent pistol cartridge-cases stamped 'Geco 7.65 D' were found in the area of the graves or among the bodies, and one live cartridge in grave No. 2.

There was a great surprise, followed by a short period of panic among the German authorities, when it was discovered that these bullets were of *German* manufacture, having been produced by the firm of Gustav Genschow & Co in Durlach near Karlsruhe. The panic only subsided when the OKH on May 31 reported that ammunition for pistols of that calibre and actual pistols had been supplied to the Soviet Union and Poland before the war, notably between 1922 and 1931. The bullets could either be from Russian dumps or from Polish equipment captured in 1939.

The Germans were in for a shock when they discovered that the numerous bullets, spent cartridge cases and the one live cartridge they had found in the graves — of 7.65mm calibre and stamped 'Geco 7.65 D' — were in fact German bullets manufactured by the firm of Gustav Genschow & Co near Karlsruhe. They imposed an immediate news black-out, only raised after the OKH armaments department checked that such ammunition had been sold to both the Soviet Union and Poland before the war. In a way, the fact that the ammunition was German strengthened their case for if the Germans had wanted to set up Katyn to make it look a Soviet crime, as Soviet propaganda maintained, they would have used Russian rounds (of which they had captured plenty in June 1941).

A great number of the bodies had their hands tied behind their backs with a rope: some 150 in grave No. 1, a few in Nos. 2 and 5, and all of those in graves Nos. 4 and 6. The ropes had apparently been prepared beforehand as they were cut in identical lengths of 1.75-1.95 metres, and a uniform method of binding had been used. In addition, several of these victims (the majority in grave No. 5 and some in other graves) had their heads wrapped up in their overcoats, the greatcoat or service dress having been pulled over the head and tied around the neck with curtain cords, so tight it must have virtually choked the victims. The head and hand bindings were then tied together tightly. Some victims in addition had their mouths stuffed with sawdust. Again, these were evidently men who had shouted or resisted at the moment of execution. All these methods were identical — so it was noted — to those used on the Russian civilian victims found in the pre-war GPU graves nearby. Also, both the expert and uniform neck shot and the uniform way of tying the victims' hands and binding their heads pointed to executions by men skilled and experienced in this kind of work.

Several victims showed stab wounds from four-edged fluted bayonets, a type of weapon not used by the Wehrmacht but typical of the Red Army.

In addition to the bullet wounds, a few bodies had jaws smashed by rifle-butt blows, or bayonet wounds in back and stomach. These were presumably victims who had resisted during or before execution. The stab wounds showed that the bayonets were four-edged weapons of the type used by the Soviet Army.

Left: **Many victims had their hands tied behind their back in an expert way, the binding being completely identical in every case: laid double, the rope was noosed around the right wrist, then wound around the left, the two ends then going round both wrists in opposite directions before being knotted.** *Right:* **Others in addition had their heads muffled in their overcoats, the neck rope then being tied to the hand manacle and tightly pulled. These methods of tying and choking resisting victims were established to be typical of Soviet secret police executioners. The same had been used on the Russian victims of pre-war GPU executions found elsewhere in Katyn wood.**

Both Germany and Poland had requested the International Red Cross for help in investigating the Katyn graves, but Soviet obstruction prevented this. The Germans thereupon organised an ad hoc 'International Medical Commission' for which they invited distinguished professors of forensic medicine from 12 European countries. The commission spent two days, April 29 and 30, at Katyn. Although several members had had doubts beforehand, the Germans allowed the commission complete freedom in their investigation.

On April 10, just during the visit of the foreign journalists, the body of a woman was discovered. The discovery of a female corpse so worried the Germans, who feared it might undermine their claim that the victims were all Polish officers, that they never mentioned it officially. Although the Germans never established her name, she was Flight-Lieutenant Janina Lewandowska of the Polish Air Force. Shot down in September 1939, she had been the only female PoW at Kozielsk.

Prevented by the USSR from obtaining an investigation by the International Red Cross, the Germans decided to do the next best thing: they invited distinguished professors of forensic medicine from 12 neutral European countries to join an International Medical Commission to conduct an investigation on the spot. The term 'neutral' meant only that the countries had no direct interest in the matter, for, of the 12 countries, four were German-occupied, seven allied to Germany (Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Rumania, Slovakia), and only one (Switzerland) really neutral.

Although some of the invitees had understandable doubts, most decided to accept to take part, seeing it as a legitimate wish of the Poles rather than as rendering a service to Germany. The commission's members were:

For Belgium: Dr Speleers, Professor of Ophthalmology at Ghent University;

For Bulgaria: Dr M.A. Markov, Reader in Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Sofia University;

For Denmark: Dr H. Tramsen, Assistant at the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Copenhagen;

For Finland: Dr Saxén, Professor of Pathological Anatomy at Helsinki University;

For Croatia: Dr E.L. Miloslavich, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Zagreb University;

For Italy: Dr V.M. Palmieri, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Naples University;

For Holland: Dr H.M. de Burlet, Professor of Anatomy at Groningen University;

For Bohemia and Moravia (i.e. Czechoslovakia): Dr F. Hájek, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Prague University;

For Rumania: Dr Birkle, Expert of Forensic Medicine of the Rumanian Ministry of Justice and first assistant at the Forensic Medicine Institute in Bucharest;

For Switzerland: Dr. F. Naville, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Geneva University;

For Slovakia (i.e. Czechoslovakia): Dr Subik, Professor of Pathological Anatomy at Bratislava (Pressburg) University and Head of the Slovakian State Health Service;

For Hungary: Dr F. Orsós, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Budapest University.

The Hungarian delegate, Professor Dr Ferenc Orsós, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Budapest University (who could speak Russian), interrogates one of the Russian witnesses. Listening on are, from left, Professor Dr Speleers from Belgium, Dr Birkle from Rumania and Professor Dr de Burlet from Holland.

Seven of the commission members conducted their own post-mortems. ***Left:*** **Here, Dr Vincenzo Palmieri, Professor of Forensic Medicine and Criminology at Naples University, conducts his autopsy on victim No. 800. Looking on is the Swiss delegate, Professor Dr François Naville of Geneva University. The victim was identified as a major in winter uniform; his hands were tied behind his back. The victim had been shot three times in the back of the head, the skull showing only two exit holes in the forehead. One 7.65mm bullet was found in the brains. From the state of decay, Palmieri concluded the victim had been dead longer than one year.**

Right: **Dr Saxen, the Finnish delegate, looks on as Dr Orsós carries out a post-mortem on victim No. 835, identified as Roman Zwierzchowski, rank unknown. It was Dr Orsós who proved that the massacre had taken place at least three years earlier. Examining a number of skulls, he looked for traces of a particular brain crust phenomenon which he knew occurred only with corpses which had been interred longer than three years, and found clear traces of this in the skull of victim No. 526. In their final report, the International Commission confirmed the findings of the German investigation, concluding that the executions had taken place in March and April 1940.**

Attending the investigation, but not part of the commission, were Professor Buhtz, the head of the German team, and Dr Costedoat, Medical Inspector on behalf of the French Vichy government. The Germans had also invited a delegate of the Polish government in London to join the commission, but he declined. The commission's work was entirely honourary. None of the members received any payment, decoration or any other compensation for it. They merely received railway tickets and their hotel bills were settled on the spot.

The 13 foreign delegates congregated in Berlin and, in a preliminary meeting, unanimously decided to keep their investigation purely scientific, excluding all political or polemical aspects, and to limit themselves to three questions: (1) identification of bodies, (2) ascertaining cause of death, and (3) establishing time of death. They flew to Smolensk on April 28 and spent two days, April 29 and 30, at the Katyn site. By then, the seven mass graves had already been found. The Germans allowed the commission absolute freedom of movement and research, giving only technical assistance. The commission members questioned a number of the Russian witnesses, and spoke with members of the Polish Red Cross team. They examined the post-mortems carried out earlier by Dr Buhtz and his team, and personally conducted autopsies on nine of the bodies (Nos. 526, 800, 827, 831, 832, 834 to 836 and 842) taken, in their presence, from the lower layers of the unexplored graves. They examined, superficially but freely, about 100 corpses which had been disinterred in their presence. They confirmed that without exception the cause of death was a shot in the back of the head and that these had been fired from extremely close range, as evidenced from the cracks in the skull, the traces of gunpowder on the skull around the entrance hole, and the similarity of the exit orifices caused by the identical path of the bullet. They confirmed that the uniforms were Polish, and underwrote the conclusion that the victims were buried in the clothes worn by them up to the moment of their death.

The Hungarian delegate, Dr Ferenc Orsós, carried out a special post-mortem for clues as to the date of death. Thirty years of experience had taught him that corpses which have been buried longer than three years develop a crust, formed of layers of necrotic structure, around the surface of the brain which is turned into a uniform clay-like pulp. Bodies that have been buried less than three years do not show this condition. Orsós examined several skulls and found, notably in the skull of body No. 526 (an unidentified 2nd lieutenant), distinct traces of this brain crust phenomenon — another indication that the executions must have taken place at least three years before.

The commission's report, written in their Smolensk hotel on April 30 and signed by all on May 1, in general confirmed the findings of the German investigation. Based on the witness statements, the dates of the diaries, letters and newspapers found on the bodies, and the experiment carried out by Professor Orsós, the commission gave as its final conclusion that the executions had taken place in March and April 1940.

When the commission left on May 1, 982 bodies had been exhumed. The excavation continued. After identification and forensic examination, the bodies were reburied with the help of members of the Polish Red Cross in newly-dug pits situated just to the north-west of the original graves. The new graves were numbered 1 to 6. The two identified generals were buried in single graves.

Victim No. 800 was one of only two victims found with three head shots. ***Left:*** **Three entry holes in the rear of the skull but** ***(right)*** **only two bullets have exited.**

Throughout May, the Germans continued to send selected groups to view the massacre site. ***Left:*** **One of them was a group of captured Allied officers — British, Canadian and American — from German prisoner-of-war camps.** ***Right:*** **The two American officers were Lieutenant Colonel John H. van Vliet and Captain Donald B. Stewart (seen here in centre). Both had been captured in North Africa. Although initially convinced the Katyn atrocity was all a German hoax, their minds were changed by a simple look at the victims' shoes. Being PoWs themselves, they realised the murdered Poles could never have been PoWs from 1939 to 1941, as the Soviets claimed, as they knew from experience that boots and shoes would have looked much worse after two years in captivity. Though thus convinced that the Soviets had done it, they refrained from making any statement about it during the war because they did not want to support the German propaganda effort.**

Meanwhile, the Germans kept up their propaganda campaign. They continued to bring selected groups to Katyn wood to view the graves, mostly journalists and writers but also, in May, a group of British, Canadian and American officer PoWs.

By late May, the exhumation of the seven mass graves was nearing completion. Then, on June 1, an eighth grave was discovered. It lay about 100 metres from the area occupied by graves Nos. 1 to 7, to the south-west, on the other side of the strip of marshy lowland. Grave No. 8 measured 5.5 by 2.5 metres and was bound at its north-western end by a barricade of pine-tree stems, a construction not seen in any of the other graves but probably meant to shut out the shifting sand. It contained an estimated 110 bodies of Polish officers. None of them had their hands tied. Unlike the corpses in the other graves, those in No. 8 were dressed in summer clothes — a salient fact supporting the assumption that they were the ones who had left Kozielsk with the last two transports, those in May 1940, when it had been much warmer. Moreover, whereas the newspapers found in graves Nos. 1-7 had dated from March to early April 1940, the papers found in No. 8 bore dates ranging from the last week of April to the first week of May 1940.

On June 3, the German police ordered the exhumation work to be stopped for sanitary reasons on account of the summer heat and the flies. The work came to an end on June 7. By then, only 13 bodies from grave No. 8 had been exhumed for examination and identification. These 13 were then re-interred in the one burial pit that had not yet been closed.

Centre: **Although the caption in the official German report on Katyn suggests this is one of the original mass graves, the Allied officers are in fact standing by one of the pits dug by the Germans to re-inter the exhumed corpses after identification. This can be deduced from its proximity to the embankment on which the track through the wood runs at this point.** ***Right:*** **Now the Polish Cemetery of Honour, with the reburial mass graves indicated by low mounds. Steps now lead down the embankment.**

Right at the end of the exhumations, on June 1, an eighth mass grave of Polish officers was discovered. Grave No. 8 lay about 100 metres away from the other graves, on the far side of the marshy lowland, and was estimated to contain some 110 bodies. From their summer uniforms and the dates of the newspapers found on them, it was concluded they were the ones who had left Kozielsk last, in early May 1940. Only 13 were exhumed for investigation before the summer heat forced the Germans to close down the exhumations, the 13 being re-interred in the last of the reburial pits. For 50 years after the war, grave No. 8 lay beyond the forbidding fence which the Soviet authorities had erected around the Polish Cemetery, unmarked and inaccessible. The fence was only pulled down in 1994-95, and the site of the grave has now been marked with a birch cross. (The original Katyn documentation (reports, identification papers, newspapers, personal items of the victims, etc.) was packed in nine crates and taken by the retreating Germans to Cracow in Poland where it was stored. Here the Polish underground managed to secretly examine the material and copy some of the documents. In early 1945, the Germans evacuated the material via Breslau to Radebeul near Dresden, where it was burned just prior to Russian entry.)

The Germans planned to resume the exhumations at a later date, but owing to the flux of war it never came to that. By late summer 1943, the Red Army was inexorably pushing the Wehrmacht back westward, and by the end of September the Soviets had freed Smolensk and pushed beyond Katyn (see *After the Battle* No. 91). In a way, the loss of the massacre site helped the Germans to dispose of a difficult problem. In all of their reports, they had upheld their initial claim that the Katyn graves contained an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 Polish officers, i.e. the full cadre of the Polish Army, but by now they had about emptied the grave-pits and knew there were far less than that, only about 4,300. Worried that this lower figure would jeopardise their propaganda, they kept silent about it, hoping perhaps to find the remaining corpses when diggings could be resumed. The loss of the site solved this problem for them.

In September 1943, the Germans published a special, 330-page report on Katyn, titled *Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn*, which contained all the documentary evidence: affidavits, German reports, the report of the International Commission, photographs, and a nominal roll of victims. Of the 4,143 bodies exhumed (including the 13 from grave No. 8), the Germans claimed to have identified 2,815 by name. Most of the others were identified by rank, or as officers. The 4,143 bodies included: 2 generals, 12 colonels, 50 lieutenant-colonels, 165 majors, 440 captains, 542 1st lieutenants, 930 2nd lieutenants, 2 paymasters, 8 warrant officers, 2 other NCOs, 101 identified as officers, 1,440 identified as 'in uniform', 146 medical officers, 10 veterinaries, 1 chaplain, 221 civilians, 21 identified only by name, 50 unidentified.

To these 4,143 must be added the some 100 corpses in grave No. 8 which were found but not exhumed.

Later Polish research was able to raise the number of identified to 2,914 and to establish that the graves must have contained: 3 generals (B. Bohatyrewicz, H. Minkiewicz, M. Smorawinski); 1 rear-admiral (K. Czernicki); 100 colonels and lieutenant-colonels; 300 majors; 1,000 captains; 2,500 1st and 2nd lieutenants; and more than 500 cadet-officers. This total included about 200 air force and about 50 naval officers. Officers of the reserve formed about half of the group and amongst them were: 21 university professors and lecturers; over 300 surgeons and physicians; over 200 lawyers, judges, prosecutors and solicitors; over 300 engineers with university degrees; several hundred high school and grammar school teachers; many journalists, writers, industrialists, business men, etc.

As soon as they retook the region of the Katyn graves in September 1943, the Soviets launched their own counter-investigation. They set up an 'Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating the Crimes committed by the German-Fascist Invaders and their Associates'. This in turn set up a 'Special Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating the Circumstances of the Shooting of Polish Officer Prisoners by the German-Fascist Invaders in the Katyn Wood'. The commissions' names already made clear that their task was not to determine who was guilty of the Katyn murders. Also, both were composed entirely of Soviet citizens of Russian nationality.

A team of the Extraordinary State Commission, led by N. N. Burdenko, went to Smolensk on September 26, 1943, and conducted an alleged four months of study and investigation into the massacre. The Soviets dug up some 925 of the bodies to perform their own post-mortems, inviting a score of Allied journalists in Moscow to look at the bodies. Most journalists were prepared to believe the Soviet version that they had been killed by the Germans in late summer 1941, although several began having doubts when they noticed most corpses were clad in winter clothes. To make sure, Moscow censorship struck out all qualifying phrases — such as 'probably' or 'evidence we were shown would tend to prove that' — from their dispatches. The Soviets produced newspapers

Katyn remained in German hands for just another three months. By the end of September 1943, the advancing Red Army had retaken Smolensk and the Katyn wood area. *Left:* On September 15, just ten days before the fall of Smolensk, a delegation of Vichy French officers and journalists, led by French Ambassador de Brinon, visited Katyn as part of a propaganda excursion to the Eastern Front. Here they stand at the graves of Generals Smorawinski (left) and Bohatyrewicz (right), the only ones to be reburied in individual graves. (Südd) *Right:* Fifty-two years on, and the two generals still rest in Russian soil.

Again in possession of the murder site, the Soviet authorities immediately staged their own 'investigation' to 'prove' that the Germans were responsible for the Katyn massacre. Once more, the corpses were dug up and subjected to an examination. This is the body of General Bohatyrewicz.

and documents dating from 1941 which they said they had found on the bodies. Kisselev, the old peasant who lived in the forest and had given evidence to the Germans, was again found, but had suddenly become deaf. However, the Soviets claimed to have collected other witness statements. The material thus assembled by the Extraordinary State Commission was then put at the disposal of the Special Commission, also chaired by Burdenko, for evaluation and judgement. (The other members had thus not done any first-hand investigation at Katyn themselves).

The report of the Special Commission, released on January 24, 1944, stated that Polish PoWs had been in the Smolensk area from the Spring of 1940, allegedly engaged in building and road repair, and quartered in three special camps situated 25 to 45 kilometres west of Smolensk, named Camp No. 1 O.N, Camp No. 2 O.N. and Camp No. 3 O.N., until the Germans captured the region in July 1941. However, the report failed to mention such essential points as the number of Polish prisoners or the actual locations of these camps. Nor did it explain why the relatives of these PoWs never received a sign of life from them, or why the USSR had never mentioned these camps to the Polish authorities in reply to the enquiries made after August 1941.

The Soviet report included witness statements, among them the alleged commander of Camp No. 1 O.N, Major V. M. Vetoshnikov, and the chief of railway traffic in the Smolensk region, Engineer S. V. Ivanov, to explain why the Soviets had been unable to evacuate these three camps before the Germans captured them, but conspicuously failed to note that other camps with Polish PoWs, some of them far more to the west than Smolensk, had been successfully evacuated (many prisoners being massacred in the process). The report also quoted statements by Russians who allegedly had seen Polish PoW work squads in German captivity in the region in August-September 1941.

The report also included documents (three letters, five receipts and one paper icon) allegedly found on the re-exhumed bodies, all of which carried dates, ranging from September 12, 1940 to June 20, 1941, to prove that the bearers had still been alive after May 1940. However, in contradiction to this, the report also declared that the Germans, in order to make it look a Soviet crime, had beforehand removed from the corpses all documents dated later than April 1940, for which work they reputedly had used 500 Soviet PoWs who had then all been shot too.

The report concluded that the Katyn murders had been committed by the Germans in September-December 1941. They even named the German unit that did it: Nachrichten-Regiment 537. The sudden departure from the earlier Soviet claims of 'August-September 1941' was probably caused by the need to explain the victims' winter clothes.

Although the Soviet exhumations had been insufficient to warrant proper calculations, their report very cleverly agreed with the German estimation of 1943 that the graves contained some 11,000 corpses. By doing so, the Soviets conveniently solved the disappearance of many more Polish prisoners than the 4,300 that had actually been found, and avoided awkward questions about what had happened to the others.

In general, the Soviet report did not stand up to careful scrutinisation, based as it was on fictitious facts, false statements by feigned witnesses and faked documents, and disqualifying itself by numerous contradictions. However, the Western allies, needing the Soviet Union in the common fight against Nazi Germany, were unwilling to query the Russian story. If it was difficult to accept the fabrication, they chose to ignore it.

US President Franklin D. Roosevelt played an important part in suppressing the truth about Katyn. Roosevelt thought it was all a German plot and was convinced the Soviets had not done it. In March 1945, he forbade George H. Earle, a former US Minister to Bulgaria and to Austria, who had received information about Katyn, to publish anything that was unfavourable to the USSR. The report written by Lieutenant Colonel John H. van Vliet, one of the Allied PoWs taken to Katyn by the Germans in 1943, which he submitted to Major General Clayton L. Bissell, Assistant Chief-of-Staff of Army Intelligence at the Pentagon, after his release, disappeared from the official archives.

The Soviets followed up their report with an elaborate propaganda campaign designed to reinforce their proposition that the Germans were responsible for the Katyn crime. At the same time, they used every possible instrument to discredit the findings of the International Commission which had investigated the murder site in 1943.

In February 1945, the Bulgarian member of the commission, Dr Marko Markov, revoked his signed statement included in the commission's report, claiming he had acted under German coercion and signed under duress. This was at a People's Tribunal in Sofia set up by the Soviet occupation army in Bulgaria at which Markov stood accused of collaboration with Nazi Germany on account of his participation in the Katyn commission. On trial for his life, Markov revoked his Katyn statement, whereupon the prosecutor dropped the charge against him.

Then, on September 11, 1946, a Communist member of the Swiss Grand Council, Jean Vincent, attacked Professor François Naville for his participation in the 1943 International Commission. In his reply to this interpellation, given on January 17, 1947, Albert Picot, head of the Geneva Cantonal Government, defended Dr Naville, reading out extracts from a report the latter had written at the government's request. In it, Naville reasserted that the commission members had not been constrained in any way in their work, had not received any reward from Germany, nor soiled the honour of their country or of the medical profession, but had only acted in the interest of truth.

As part of their hoax, the Soviets concocted a story that the Germans had used 500 Soviet PoWs from a 'PoW Camp No. 126' to dig up the bodies of the Poles they themselves had shot, remove all documents dated later than April, 1940, and then re-bury the bodies so that they could be exhumed in the presence of observers. The 500 Russians were then allegedly shot by the Germans. Although Russia has now admitted that this story is as fake as everything else in their version of Katyn, the memorial which the Soviets erected in memory of the 500 still stands along the track to the Polish Cemetery.

At the Nuremberg trials, having taken the position they did on Katyn, the Russians could not escape bringing in the massacre as a German war crime. Strangely enough, although the crime had been against Poles, the court heard no evidence from Polish representatives, neither from Communist Poland nor from the Free Poles-in-exile, although it did consider documents compiled by the Polish government-in-exile. On July 1, 1946, the Soviet prosecutor, Colonel L.N. Smirnov, called forward Dr Markov who dutifully repeated his revocation of his 1943 Katyn statement. The Soviets produced the deputy mayor of Smolensk to state that the Katyn wood had never been a restricted area before June 1941, that there had even been a camp of the Pioneer Youth Movement in the vicinity. They also produced two other witnesses who claimed they had seen Polish PoWs in the area in September 1941.

However, to the Soviets' unpleasant surprise, the German officer named in their report as having been in charge of the massacre, Oberst Friedrich Ahrens, voluntarily came forward to testify. Standing up to a week-long barrage of Soviet questions, he proved beyond doubt that he was not present at the alleged time of the massacre, nor at that time commander of the unit accused, Nachrichten-Regiment 537 (which had been stationed in the Katyn wood area in 1941-43, the NKVD datcha serving as its CP). When the Russians claimed that his predecessor, Oberst Albert Bedenk, was responsible, the German defence produced him as well. At this, the Russians dropped the case. By failing to prove German guilt, the Soviets had only, though indirectly, incriminated themselves. However, Katyn never appeared in the final Nuremberg verdicts. The omission meant that one of the worst atrocities of the war went completely ignored, with the culprit escaping with impunity. (The Russians had Dr Markov executed, as they had the Slovakian member of the 1943 commission, Dr Subik.)

In the post-war era, with the world divided into two blocs, it was still not in the interest of the Western powers to irritate or provoke the powerful Soviet Union. Further mention of Katyn would have done just that, and so a conspiracy of silence descended on the matter.

After the 1945 Yalta Conference, the Western nations opted to recognise the Soviet-sponsored Communist government of Poland, withdrawing recognition of the Polish government-in-exile in London in July. Indefatigably, the exiled Poles continued to fight for their cause, and for the perpetrators of Katyn to be punished. In December 1944, the Polish government-in-exile had appointed a special committee to conduct its own investigation into the disappearance of the 15,000 officers and intellectuals. Its findings were published in February 1946 in a white book entitled *Facts and Documents concerning the Polish Prisoners-of-War captured by the USSR during the 1939 Campaign*. The exiled Poles continued to collect every scrap of documentary evidence, published books (notably *The Katyn Crime in the light of Documents* published in Polish in London in 1947, with later editions in French and English), and informed governments and public opinion of their work. Every April, they held solemn mass meetings to commemorate the victims of Katyn. On April 2, 1949, the Polish Association of Former Soviet Political Prisoners was founded. On April 28, 1950, at a press conference called on the occasion of what the Poles were sure was the 10th anniversary of the Katyn murder, General Anders called for the appointment of a new International Tribunal to judge the case that had been left undecided at Nuremberg and condemn the culprit, which the Poles were positive was the Soviet Union.

At the 1946 Nuremberg trials, the Soviet Union brought in the Katyn massacre as part of its war crimes indictment against Germany. They made Professor M.A. Markov, who in 1943 had been the Bulgarian member of the International Commission, retract his 1943 report and state that the commission had worked under German coercion. The Soviet prosecution also stated that the killings had been done by a German signal unit, Nachrichten-Regiment 537, under an Oberst Friedrich Ahrens. However, their case fell through when the German defence produced former Oberst Ahrens *(right)*, who convincingly proved that he was not yet in command of the unit at the said time. By failing to pin the blame on the Germans, the Russians had only strengthened the suspicion against themselves. However, the court chose to drop the case. (Südd)

Still, individual people raised their voice in support of the Poles. In Britain, Professor Sir Douglas Savory, MP, from 1944 onwards campaigned tirelessly for justice in the Katyn case, proposing a motion signed by 123 House members, and appealing (in a speech to the Commons on November 6, 1952) to bring the case before the UN.

In the United States, Congressmen George A. Dondero on July 7, 1949, and Ray J. Madden on September 29, 1949, demanded conviction of those guilty of Katyn. That same year, an 'American Committee for the Investigation of the Katyn Massacre' was founded under the chairmanship of Arthur Bliss Lane, former US Ambassador to Poland. As a result of their work, and prompted by rumours that UN soldiers in Korea were being 'katynised', the House of Representatives on September 18, 1951, set up a Select Committee to investigate the Katyn case. Consisting of four Democrats and three Republicans and chaired by Madden, the committee between February and June, 1952, held sittings in Washington, Chicago, London, Frankfurt-am-Main, Berlin and Naples. They heard altogether 81 witnesses and received over 100 depositions from witnesses unable to appear in person. The Soviet government rejected an invitation to cooperate, referring to its own report of 1944; the Communist Polish government rejected likewise and began a vicious propaganda campaign against the committee. The evidence assembled by the committee was published in December 1952 in seven voluminous white books. Its unanimous verdict was that 'beyond any question of reasonable doubt' the Soviet NKVD was guilty of the atrocity. However, the committee's proposal for a UN inquiry into the case came to nothing.

Unflagging insistence by exiled Poles and others in the free world that one of the worst crimes of the past war could not remain unpunished led to the US Congress in September 1951 setting up a 'Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre'. After two series of witness hearings in the United States, the committee in March 1952 secured permission from the House to take additional testimony abroad. After hearings in London on April 16-19, the committee travelled to Germany for further sessions at Frankfurt (April 21-26) and Berlin (April 25). Afraid of reprisals against relatives in Poland, several of the Polish witnesses appeared with their faces masked. Others appealed to the pressmen not to take any pictures of them. (Südd)

12 Russian protests over memorial to Katyn dead

By GODFREY BARKER

A SAD, gaunt memorial to 14,471 Poles murdered by Russians in 1940—a third of them buried in the Katyn Forest near Smolensk, the others still unfound—was unveiled in Kensington Cemetery, Gunnersbury, at the weekend.

The dead were said by Churchill in 1951 to have included "a considerable number of Poland's leading citizens."

But on Saturday the British Government was not represented and of the other Nato countries, only the United States embassy sent a representative.

The extent of Russian pressure on the Government was made clear by the claim of a member of the memorial committee that 12 visits had been made by the Soviet ambassador to the Foreign Secretary to get the ceremony banned.

Representations were also made by the Polish embassy, but the Government refused to interfere with the decision of the Kensington and Chelsea B... Council to allow the mem...

The hour-long ceremony with the singing of the national anthem and ende... the haunting lament of th... Post. Some of the widows... dead, and former soldiers... ing aloft Polish regimental... were moved to tears.

'1940' inscription

The 21ft high obelisk, ... in black Nubian granite, ... the gold inscription: ... 1940." Underneath, ... the words—

Russians urge ban on Katyn memorial

By GERARD KEMP

THE Russian Embassy is appealing to the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea to ban a proposed memorial to the 14,471 Polish Army officers and men massacred by the Russian secret police at Katyn in 1940.

Permission for the controversial 20ft obelisk to be erected in Gunnersbury cemetery, was granted last year by the Royal borough after a plan to put it up in St Luke's churchyard, Chelsea, fell through.

The Russians say that the memorial's inscription will be ...

Tory anger a... 'snub' over Katyn tribut...

Daily Telegraph Reporter

THE Government was accused yesterday of "weakly kowtowing to the Russians" by a Conservative M P angry at the lack of official representation at the Katyn Memorial unveiling in Hammersmith, on Saturday.

The Memorial commemorates the massacre of 14,471 Polish officers by Soviet troops in April, 1940. The massacre, which the Russians have always ascribed to the Germans, became known when Hitler's troops stumbled on the graves of 4,254 Polish officers in uniform in the Katyn Forest, near Smolensk, in 1943.

Despite Russian pressure, which helped defeat a previous attempt to erect a Katyn memorial in Chelsea in 1974, a 20ft high obelisk is to be dedicated ... Gunnersbury Cemetery on ...aturday.

US representation

"The Government is taking ... on this by weakly accepting the Russian version of ...nts which is accepted by no ...otable historian." Mr ...ston Churchill, M P for ...tford, said last nigh... ...r Churchill said that the ...ed States Government will ...presented at the ceremony, ... with a parade of British Polish ex-Servicemen plus G C's, Field-Marshals and ...als of the Royal ...

"APPEASEMENT" LIVES ON

IT IS DEPRESSING that the Government should have gone to such extraordinary lengths to forbid any kind of official representation at tomorrow morning's unveiling of a memorial to 14,471 Polish officers and men murdered in Russia during the war. The unveiling will take place at 10.30 at Gunnersbury Cemetery, Hammersmith. The memorial bears the inscription "Katyn, 1940." At that date, the forest of Katyn, west of Smolensk, was still in Russian hands. After it had been overrun by Germany, a mass grave containing the bodies of 4,443 Polish officers was discovered. Ever since, Russia has tried to maintain that they had been murdered by the Germans after Germany had invaded Russia—i.e. that they were not killed in 1940, and not, therefore, killed by the Russians. But there has since been overwhelming evidence that they were.

This is not the place to rehearse again that evidence. It is all available for anyone who wants to study it. Suffice to quote one comment by Sir ALEXANDER CADOGAN, head of the Foreign Office in 1943, after reading a despatch by Sir OWEN MALLEY (reported in *The Daily Telegraph* on July 5, 1972, by the late IAN COLVIN): "I confess that in rather cowardly fashion I had rather turned my head away from the scene at Katyn." Of course, after Germany's invasion of Russia, Britain and Russia were allies, the war was raging, there were indeed powerful reasons for turning away the head. But more than 36 years later? The Poles were our allies, too, earlier ones than the Russians. Thousands fought and died with the British forces. Some may say, what does it matter, when so many millions died on both sides? It matters because the British Government is still "turning away its head," for fear of annoying the Russians—appeasement of the most puerile kind. It does us all a disservice. The Russians will merely note another sign of British weakness and hypocrisy: that we are afraid of our enemies.

A bad day for Britain

...HERE WAS no official or uniformed ...ritish representation at the unveiling ...eremony in Hammersmith yesterday to ...ore than 14,000 Polish officers, killed ...r missing in the Soviet Union during the ...econd World War. Very strong, indeed ...rtually incontrovertible, evidence ...ists that the Russians were responsible ...r murdering 4,400-odd Polish officers, ...hose bodies were subsequently found ... a mass grave in the forest of Katyn, ...est of Smolensk. But the Russians con...nue to deny that they are the guilty ...es, and to attribute responsibility for ...e outrage to the Germans. No interna...onal tribunal or court of law has ever ...ttled the issue, nor is one ever likely to. The official line of British reasoning ...

this country, in deal... the memorial, are ... tragedy as a gesture ... Moscow, but against ... in Warsaw. Doubtless ... entitled to do so. But ...sideration, nor any fea... Russians, should have ... in the Foreign Office. E... more in doubt than it ... reasonable objection ... ment's allowing unifor... men of the British Forc... respects to the memor... Poles. However they di... part of the military est... nation in whose defence ... war in 1939. Yesterday w...

For over 35 years, there was no memorial anywhere in the world to the 14,500 Poles murdered under Soviet terror. In Poland, the Communist regime did not allow any Katyn memorial to be set up, let alone one that would date the crime to 1940. To correct this, a Katyn Memorial Committee was set up in Britain but it took several years to achieve its goal, Soviet diplomatic protests frightening Her Majesty's Government from giving the committee its wholehearted support. The Katyn Memorial was finally unveiled in Gunnersbury Cemetery in Hammersmith, London, on September 18, 1976. (AP)

For nearly 50 years, notwithstanding de-Stalinisation under Khrushchev, Moscow continued to uphold Stalin's version of Katyn. After the war, the Katyn wood grave site was made into a monument to the 'Polish officers murdered by the German-Fascist invaders'. To sow further confusion, Soviet propaganda began publicising a village with a similar name, Khatyn in Byelorussia, which really *had* been the site of a German-committed massacre, its population having been killed and the village burnt in March 1943. A major war memorial was unveiled here in 1969 (see *After the Battle* No. 50).

For nearly 50 years, and all through the Cold War, Katyn continued to cloud the relations between Poland and the Soviet Union, not so much on government level — for the Polish Communist leaders were faithful servants of Soviet interests and reliable partners in the Warsaw Pact — but on the basic level of the Polish people as a whole. By order from Moscow, the Polish authorities imposed an absolute ban on the subject. The families of Katyn victims were deprived of the pensions which were paid to the widows and orphans of soldiers killed by the Germans. Polish censorship did not allow a single mention of the name Katyn in public. No scientific works, books or articles on it appeared in print. No monument, no memorial ceremony was allowed. Until 1975, even the approved Soviet version was suppressed. This led to the ironic situation that the Katyn victims were not even included in the official tributes to the victims of Nazi terror. Yet, the subjugated Poles did not forget Katyn. In October 1956, demonstrators in the streets of Warsaw chanted 'Katyn, Katyn, Katyn'.

The Memorial Committee included several prominent Britons, such as Lord George-Brown, Lord Barnby, Mr Airey Neave, MP, and Mr Winston Churchill, MP. Here, the grandson of the wartime leader lays a wreath on behalf of the Churchill family. The fact that the British Labour government forbade any official or uniformed representation at the unveiling ceremony led to bitter press comments and accusations in Parliament that the government was 'weakly kowtowing to the Russians'. (AP)

Although Katyn became the symbol, the controversy was about all the 15,000 prisoners, not just the 4,300 from Kozielsk who were later found murdered at Katyn, but also the 11,000 from Starobielsk and Ostashkov who had disappeared altogether. The mystery of what had happened to the latter gave rise to various rumours and theories. One rumour, which had already sprung up in 1943, was that those from Ostashkov had all been drowned in the White Sea off Archangielsk, having been towed out in two barges which had then been cut adrift and sunk. However, the identical way in which the Soviets had treated the Polish PoWs and disbanded their camps, strongly suggested an identical manner of killing them too. The inevitable conclusion was that, somewhere in the vast territory of the USSR, there must be two sites like Katyn, probably a forest near a small railway station, places where a massacre had taken place, with undetected mass graves still in situ.

Barred from erecting a Katyn memorial on Polish soil, from 1971 a joint committee of Free Poles and Britons strove to erect such a memorial in London. However, the British government was against such an initiative for fear of annoying the Soviets. Russian pressure helped defeat a first attempt to erect a memorial in Chelsea in 1974. A second attempt in 1976 was more successful. Despite repeated protests from the Russian Embassy, an obelisk bearing the inscription 'Katyn 1940', was unveiled in Gunnersbury Cemetery in Hammersmith in London on September 18, 1976. The US Embassy sent a representative, but official British representation was conspicuously absent.

In Poland, despite the complete ban on the subject imposed by the regime, the memory of Katyn remained strong. The flicker of freedom lighted by the Solidarnosc movement prompted the creation of a 'symbolic grave' of Katyn victims in Powazki Military Cemetery in Warsaw. ***Left:*** **On All Saints Day 1982, the country's first under martial law, the cemetery was again the stage of a silent demonstration. (Südd)**

It was only in 1989, with the communists regime being ousted by a democratically elected government, that the ban on Katyn was finally lifted. Later that year, the USSR allowed a pilgrimage of 314 relatives of Katyn victims to visit Katyn, the largest group ever permitted to do so. ***Right:*** **On October 30, Polish priests celebrated Mass for the slain officers in the cemetery. (AP)**

In Poland, things began to shift with the rise of the Solidarnosc movement in the late 1970s. In Warsaw, a birch grove in Powazki Military Cemetery was baptised a symbolic grave of Katyn victims. Known as the 'Katyn hollow', it became a place of pilgrimage to dissidents and a symbol of opposition to the government, especially after the new Polish leader, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, declared martial law on December 13, 1981. Despite the ban imposed by martial law, every November 1, All Saints Day, thousands continued to flock to the symbolic grave to lay flowers and light candles.

Then, at Easter 1985, the Polish authorities sprang a surprise move. Overnight, they erected a granite cross in the cemetery with the text: 'To the Polish soldiers, victims of Hitlerite fascism who rest in the Katyn soil'. The inscription caused widespread indignation. In protest, people wrote 'NKVD 1940' in the sand around the cross.

The situation began to change after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985. As part of his 'glasnost' and 'perestroika', Gorbachev wanted to improve Soviet-Polish relations. In April 1987, he and Jaruzelski agreed to set up a commission of 20 Polish and Soviet historians to investigate the 'white spots' in the Polish-Soviet history: not just Katyn, but also the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 1939, the deportation of over a million Poles to remote parts of the USSR in 1939-41, the non-intervention of the Red Army in the Warsaw insurrection of 1944, and the post-war trial in Moscow against 16 top leaders of the Polish resistance. Results of the commission's work were slow in forthcoming, which led to increasingly more open protests being voiced in Polish public opinion, and even in Parliament. In July 1988, Gorbachev visited Poland but, to everyone's disappointment, he said nothing about Katyn. In September 1988, the Polish episcopate received Russian permission to erect a wooden cross at the memorial in Katyn wood, albeit without any year or date.

On June 4, 1989, the Solidarnosc democrats defeated the communists in the Polish general elections. The new government immediately increased the pressure on Moscow concerning the Katyn issue. At home, the Poles could at last talk freely about Katyn. Signs that the subject was no longer taboo were immediately evident. The inscription on the granite cross at Powazki Cemetery, already changed in April, was finally given a year: '1940'. In October, millions of People watched a documentary about Katyn (by Witold Zadrowski, an exiled Pole living in France), the first programme on Katyn ever broadcast by Polish television. That same October, the Russian authorities for the first time allowed a group of Polish relatives of Katyn victims to visit the memorial in Katyn wood.

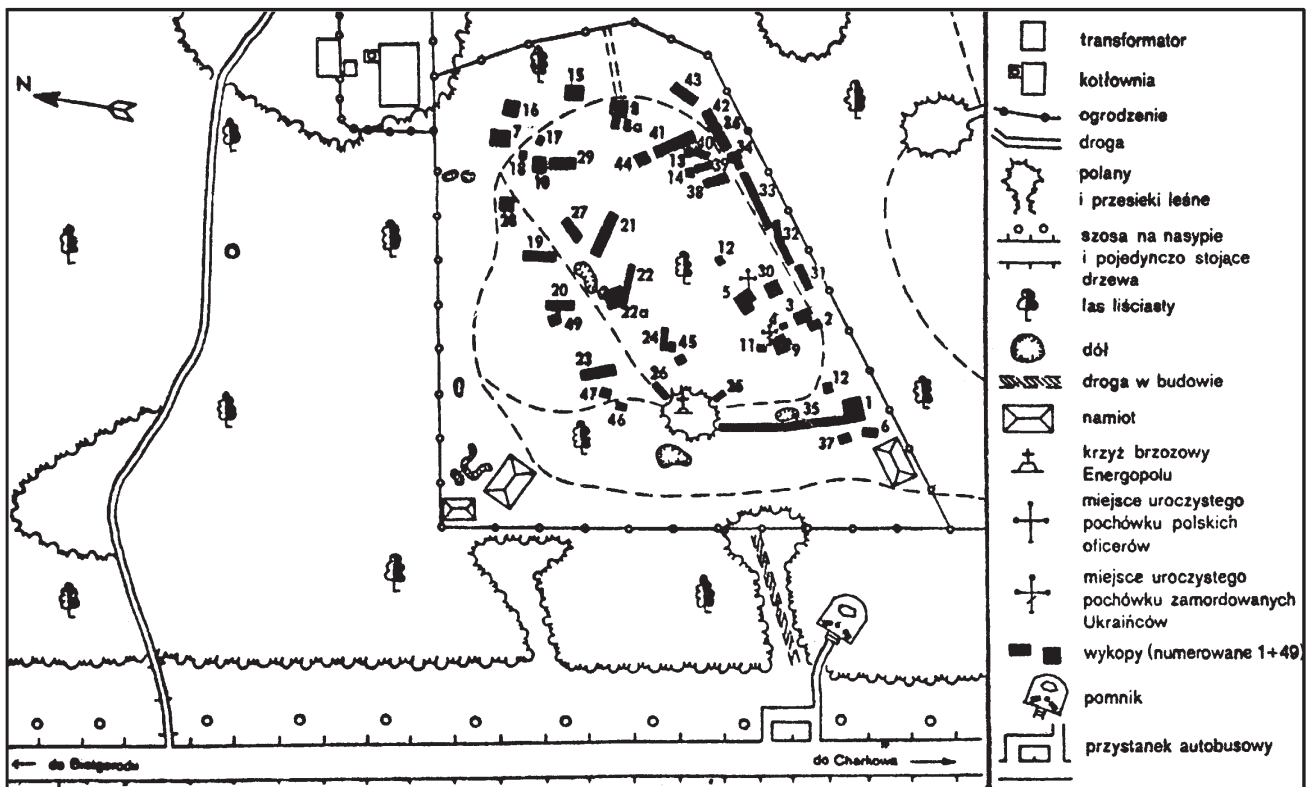
By the time of the 50th anniversary of Katyn in April 1990, the granite cross at Powazki Cemetery, first erected by the communist authorities in 1985 with a false inscription, had been given the correct year: 1940. (Südd)

Ten days later, on April 14, Polish President Wojciech Jaruzelski laid a wreath at the memorial in Katyn wood. The day before, just as Jaruzelski was meeting Gorbachev, the USSR had for the first time admitted NKVD guilt for the crime. (AP)

That same summer, the sites of the other two 'Katyns', the places where the Polish prisoners from the Starobielsk and Ostashkov camps had been murdered by Stalin's NKVD, were discovered. The mass grave of the 3,900 Poles from Starobielsk was found near Kharkov in the Ukraine, on the site of a former NKVD rest-house, which later became a KGB estate. (Fsmpb)

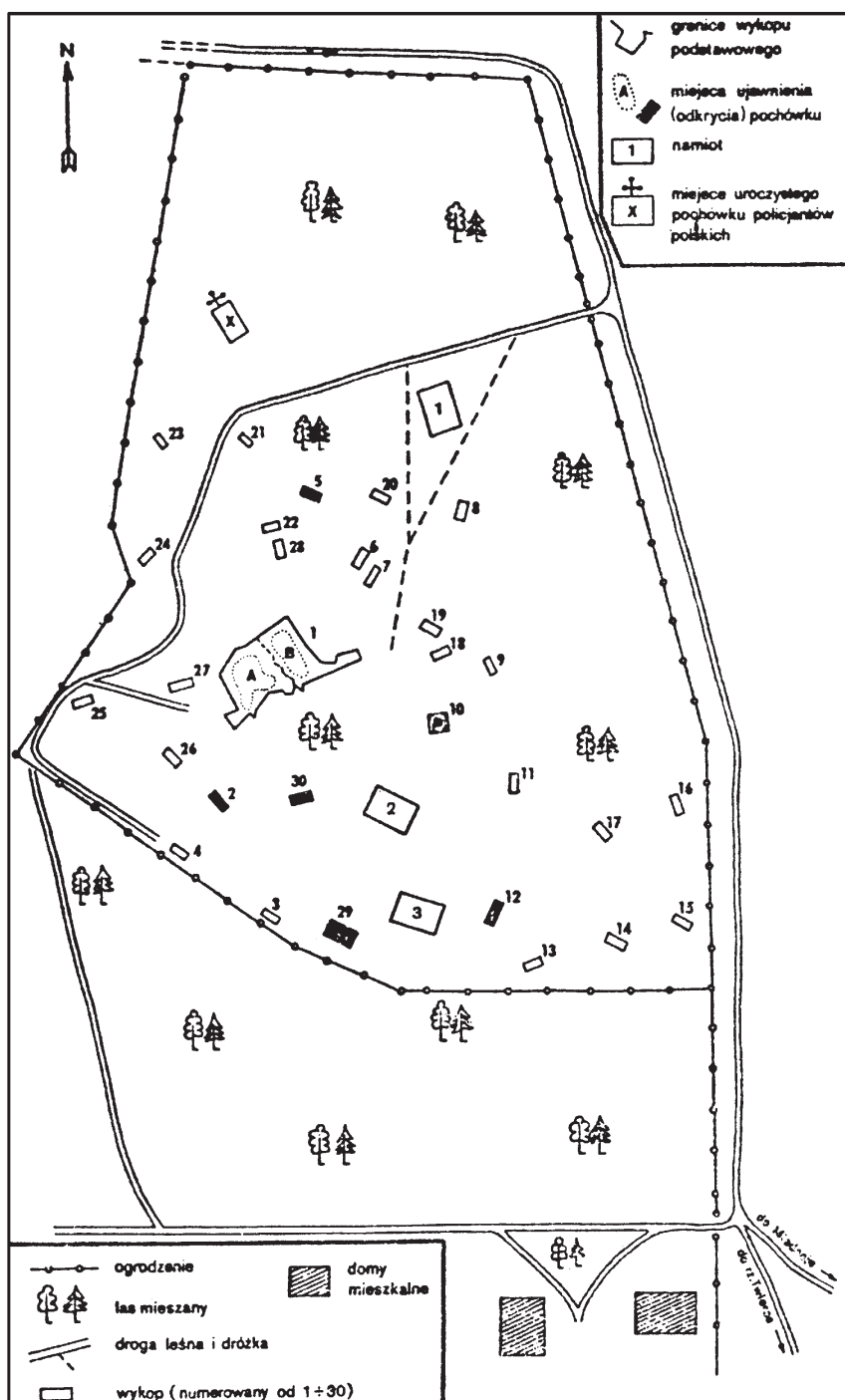
At last, on the 50th anniversary of the crime, on April 13, 1990, the USSR for the first time admitted that it was responsible for the Katyn murders. Gorbachev ordered a judicial inquiry into the Katyn case, calling upon the prosecutor's office to search KGB and Interior Ministry archives for files to reveal the truth. Invited to cooperate in the inquiry, Poland appointed Deputy Attorney-General Stefan Sniezko to lead the Polish delegations. Again, the inquiry made only slow progress.

Then, within a very short time, the two massacre sites of the Poles from the other two PoW camps were found. First, in May 1990, the Russian Memorial association, a private organisation founded in the wake of 'glasnost' and dedicated to the memory of the victims of Stalinism, announced that it had discovered a mass grave of Polish officers in a wood near Kharkov. Researchers of the local Kharkov branch had been looking for graves of Ukrainian victims and accidentally stumbled upon the Polish graves. It soon became clear that it contained the remains of the 3,891 prisoners from Starobielsk, whose trace had ended at Kharkov station. The Russian/Polish prosecutors subsequently found a former warden of the prison in Kharkov who gave evidence that these Poles had been brought to the prison and been executed in the basement of the building.

Then, in June 1990, the Soviet Military Attorney-General's office announced that it had found another mass grave of Polish

The bodies of the 6,200 prisoners from Ostashkov were found at Miednoje near Tver (Kalinin). In 1994 and again in 1995, Polish exhumation-sounding teams carried out extensive investigations at both Kharkov and Miednoje (Rada/Fsmpb)

officers at Miednoje near Tver (Kalinin), about 100 miles north-west of Moscow. This contained the remains of the Ostashkov prisoners, 6,287 in all in 30 separate pits. The military investigators also traced the 1940 chief of the Tver NKVD, Major-General Tokariev, who, though very old and blind, gave a detailed description of the executions at Miednoje. In July-August 1991, a joint Polish-Soviet team supervised exhumations at both Kharkov and Miednoje which provided conclusive proof.

Then, 52 years after the crime, came the final disclosure and admission of guilt. On October 14, 1992, Russian President Boris Yeltsin sent the director of the Russian State Archive, Rudolf Pikhoya, to Warsaw as a personal envoy to hand over to Polish President Lech Walesa copies of documents which finally proved Soviet responsibility.

One was a proposal by Lavrenti Beria, chief of the NKVD, to the Politburo, dated March 5, 1940, and signed for approval by Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and Mikoyan, to execute 25,700 Polish officers, policemen, landowners, clergymen, state officials, and other members of the intelligentsia as 'mortal enemies of the Communist power'. Another document was a 1959 KGB report stating that 21,857 Poles had actually been executed.

Five decades of controversy were finally laid to rest on October 14, 1992, when Russia's new president, Boris Yeltsin, released the secret Katyn file from the Kremlin safe, which contained documents proving Soviet responsibility for Katyn and other mass executions of Polish prisoners. The director of the Russian State Archive, Rudolf Pikhoya (left), travelled to Warsaw to personally hand over copies of the documents to Polish President Lech Walesa. Moved to tears, Walesa declared: 'This was a courageous decision by President Yeltsin to perform this gesture which no one could afford before'. He added that the move would improve bilateral relations which until now had been 'poisoned' by the Katyn issue. (Südd)

Thus, the documents revealed that, if anything, all Polish and Western historians so far had underestimated the scope of the massacre: Stalin had not just ordered the elimination of the 14,700 from the three camps, but also of 11,000 others detained in Ukrainian and Byelorussian prisons; and many more graves remained to be discovered.

The documents also revealed deliberate actions of the post-war Soviet leaders to hide the truth. One document, dated March 4, 1970, recorded a decision by the Politburo, then headed by Leonid Brezhnev, that the Katyn file should be placed in a super-secret archive marked 'Do not ever open'. The last document, dated as late as December 24, 1991, was an instruction from Gorbachev confirming that the file should remain closed. According to Pikhoya, all successors of Stalin, from Khrushchev to Gorbachev, had known of these documents, and the file had been found in the secret personal archive of the secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union, i.e. Gorbachev. Yeltsin's move was generally seen as an attempt to discredit his predecessor and rival for power Gorbachev by exposing him as a man who only paid lip-service to the truth, and to expose the Russian Communist Party as a criminal organisation.

The controversy finally laid to rest, both governments embarked on reconciliation. On August 25, 1993, during his first state visit to Poland, Yeltsin laid flowers at the Katyn monument in the Powazki Cemetery. On June 4, 1995, during a ceremony at the Katyn wood memorial, President Walesa laid a plaque to the victims of 1940.

However, even though Russia has now admitted its guilt, the Katyn case is still a delicate matter. For one thing, Moscow is afraid Poland will demand financial compensation for its loss and grief; many Poles are still angry that the Russians have never made an official apology for their crime; also, other Eastern European countries — Hungary, Finland, the Baltic countries — mourn similar victims of Soviet terror and may demand similar enquiries which may lead to more mass graves being discovered.

Since the discovery of the graves at Miednoje and Kharkov, Polish efforts have been directed at getting permission to turn them into proper cemeteries. At Katyn, there also still remained the some 100 victims never exhumed from grave No. 8. Moreover, a high steel fence, which the Soviets had erected closely around the Polish Memorial to keep visitors from exploring the rest of the wood, ran right across the site of the original graves Nos. 1 and 2, and blocked access to the other graves, including No. 8. This the Poles also wanted corrected.

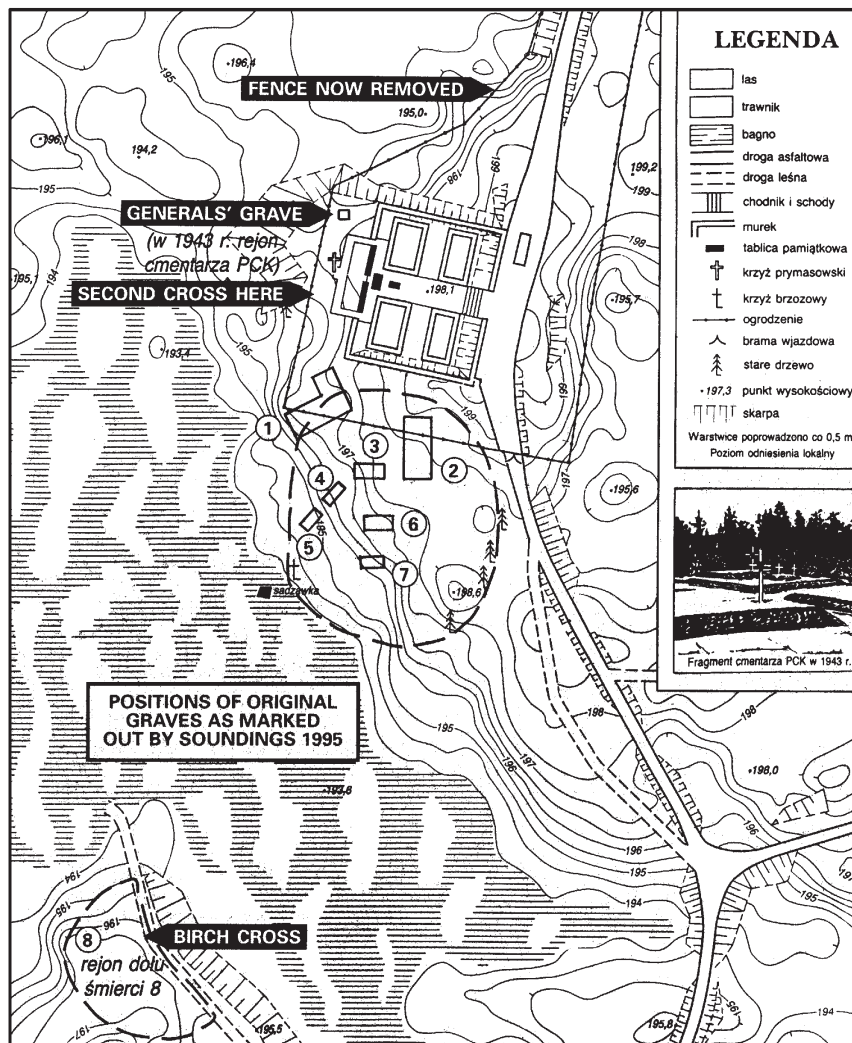
After prolonged negotiations with the Russians, Polish investigative teams of the Rada Ochrony Pamieci Walk i Meczenstwa (Council for the Preservation of the Memory of the Struggles and Martyrdom) left for

Thus came an end to a 50-year-old controversy. On August 25, 1993, during his first state visit to Poland, Yeltsin laid flowers at the Katyn monument in the Powazki Cemetery. (Reuter/Popperfoto)

Plan of Katyn in 1993. Since then, the fence surrounding the memorial has been taken down. We have overlaid the positions of the original graves.

Russia in September 1994 to conduct surveys and earth soundings at the three sites. The work was continued in June-September 1995, resulting in extensive written, photographic and cartographic documentation. At Katyn, the steel fence was removed and the exact position of the original graves plotted. The human remains from grave No. 8 were dug up and the site marked with a birch cross. When we visited the wood in November 1995, the contours of the eight graves were marked by lengths of striped plastic tape.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, it has also become possible for the Russians to begin investigating Katyn wood as a place where their own compatriots were executed during the years of Soviet terror. In the section of wood where the Russian civilians executed in 1918-29 were buried, freely accessible at last, earth soundings have been carried out. At the north-western tip, along the track to the Polish Memorial, a Russian memorial cross has been erected.

For anyone planning to visit Katyn, Smolensk is a good base. Smolensk is on the Moscow-Minsk-Warsaw railway with several daily trains to and from Moscow (5-8 hours), Minsk (4 hours) and Warsaw (12 to 14 hours). There are daily rail links with western Europe. By motorway, it is some 550 miles from Warsaw and 250 from Moscow. Smolensk has four hotels, all large but poor in comfort according to Western standards. From the town, a taxi drive to Katyn wood takes about 15 minutes. There is also a regular bus line. On the way, one passes through Gniezdovo, with the railway station where the trains with the Polish prisoners were off-loaded just off a side street to the left. Two miles further on, as the road climbs up a crest, the entrance to the Polish Memorial is indicated by blue shields. Access to the wood area is now unrestricted.

On June 4, 1995, Walesa travelled to Katyn wood to lay a memorial plaque in memory of the victims buried there and elsewhere in Russia. In his message to Walesa, Yeltsin noted that Stalin's henchmen had also buried more than 10,000 other victims of various nationalities in the forest declaring that 'We consider this forest a memorial for the victims of totalitarianism, (a place) where a monument to all the innocent victims should be created'. The section of the wood where the Soviet secret police executed and buried Russian political prisoners is now marked by a memorial stone and cross.

From the Editor . . .

With the ending of the long run of 50th anniversary events, this is perhaps the moment to look back and reflect. The intense media spotlight, coupled with major acts of remembrance by veterans, has left its mark on our memories, but, as Press and TV turn their interests elsewhere, *After the Battle* soldiers on as it has done for the past 90-odd issues.

As your Editor for over 20 years, I have always preferred to take a long-term view of history rather than attempt to 'cash in' on anniversaries. This was partly the reason why I delayed the publication of our latest work, *D-Day Then and Now*, until *after* the actual anniversary. This enabled us to take the comparison photographs in 1994 — exactly 50 years later with many on June 6 itself — and also gave me the opportunity to include a chapter on the actual commemorations themselves. To that end, I was privileged to have the services of Brigadier Tom Longland, in charge of the World War II Commemoration Team in the UK, who has also been responsible for the other national events including the remarkable VJ ceremonies.

Inevitably, however hard one tries, odd errors slip through the net, and I was taken to task by ex-Sergeant Hyman Haas of the 467th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion (SP) in my description of the taking of Exit E-1 on Omaha Beach, which I based on various official US Army historical accounts published in 1945, 1951 and 1985. Writing from the Bronx, New York, Mr Haas identifies himself in the picture at the bottom left of page 202 of Volume 1 of *D-Day Then and Now* as 'sitting on my half-track with my feet dangling behind the left shoulder of the GI holding the pet crow'.

I would have been very happy to identify the unit shown in this photo but, as I have explained many times before, official captions are very poor and, without positive identification, one is limited to educated guesswork which can be dangerous. Anyway, Mr Haas also identifies another picture (top left, page 357) as 'the wreckage of our Battery A's 2nd Platoon's M15 and M16 half-tracks. Our executive officer Lieutenant Nauer's Jeep is clearly shown, plus the area of their landing site: Wiederstandsnest 62 on the eastern border of Easy Red Beach where we had numerous dead and wounded. Allow me to assure you that those are the remains of our 2nd Platoon. The platoon landed early enough to be the recipients of some real vicious enemy fire, the results of which you can plainly see.

'The Editor places our unit on the beach at 0830 with the inference that the bunker was already knocked out at that time. That's not

The Battalion's assignment in the invasion of France was to land at 0830, 6 June 1944 on Beach 46, vicinity of St. Laurent-sur-Mer, and to proceed to the designated exits and set up anti-aircraft defense for the Beach Maintenance Area and Beach Exits. H-Hour was 0630.

The actual landings occured as follows due to the water obstacles on the beach and intensive enemy fire from 88mm shells, mortar fire and machine-gun fire.

"A" Battery	0910
Battalion Headquarters	0930
"B" Battery	1600
"C" Battery	1600
"D" Battery (less 2nd Platoon)	1600

Second Platoon, Battery "D" did not land.

During this time, the enemy had excellent observation of our troops and it appeared that most of the 88mm and mortar fire was directed at wheel and track vehicles upon hitting the beach as well as the crafts waiting for an approach to the beach. One of our craft suffered four casualties and slight damage to the vehicles prior to touchdown. The exits were not open to afford the unit to take positions for AA defense which caused congestion on the beach strip and other units moving in added to the problem of dispersing vehicles and personnel. Battery "A" landed on a portion of the beach which was the left flank and they were also the first wheeled vehicles to land. In that sector they were subjected to direct 88mm fire and machine-gun fire and it was necessary to utilize an M15A1 half-track to neutralize the enemy fortification, such action opening exit E-1. Numerous casualties of personnel and vehicles were sustained. On D-Day 35% of the vehicles were lost and 18% of the unit's personnel

It seems that even After Action Reports can be wrong. In the case of the 467th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion's description of the landing on Omaha's Easy Red Beach, according to ex-Sergeant Hyman Haas, the battalion diarist gave incorrect landing times for all its units. *Top:* Members of the 467th return to 'their' bunker, L-R: Dal Estes, Battery C; Estelle Monson with her husband Orval of Battery B; Hyman Haas, Battery A, with his wife Esther; Henry Ayala and Dr Thomas Macdonnell of Battery A.

Mr Haas, who was a member of Battery A's 1st Platoon, crossed swords with me over my captioning concerning this particular bunker (for the technically-minded, a Type R667 with a 50mm KwK gun), part of the German strong point WN 65. The impact marks from the shots he fired on D-Day can be seen on the left. The damage to the roof caused by the naval shell is covered with a tarpaulin. (USNA)

the actual time we landed and I may have inadvertently mentioned that time to one or more of the many interviewers who questioned me. In our Battalion HQ After Action Report, a worse mistake is made in our actual landing time so I'll forgive that error on your assumption as to when my platoon actually touched down on Omaha Beach. In order to find an average time for all batteries, Battalion HQ miss-stated all landing times. B Battery is still livid with anger at the error as are we of A Battery. C and D Batteries landed much later.

'The truth is that I remember checking my watch when we started our run onto the beach: the time was 0700. We may have taken a half-hour to actually land. In any event, the 1st Platoon of A Battery 467 AAA, which included me and my section, was on the beach at 0730, perhaps 0745, or 0800. You have to understand that time becomes irrelevant under great excitement and stress.'

However, what really upset Mr Haas was my caption on page 359 (bottom) concerning the 88mm casemate at E-1 which has borne, as far back as I can remember, a memorial plaque to the Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group. In the run up to the 50th anniversary of D-Day, dozens of new plaques and memorials appeared right across Normandy and, while I accept the right of any unit to want to stake its claim in any battle, I was concerned over this proliferation because many of them will not stand the test of time. Too many memorials lead to the 'oh-it's-just-another-memorial' syndrome, diluting the respect they should all be accorded.

At the E-1 casemate, with the records showing (erroneously, as we now know) that the 467th AAA AW Battalion did not land until 0830, it appeared to me that Mr Haas's unit plaque had usurped the bunker over the heads of the engineers. I was wrong, as Mr Haas explains.

'Once on the beach (western section of Easy Red), my section was alerted to the presence of the armed bunker by an infantry officer. This officer ran over to us, excitedly pointing out the bunker. We were facing west and we turned right and back into the surf from which we fired on the bunker. You can bet the bunker was alive and kicking at the time. This was not the case after we finished firing.

'My section consisted of two squads, one an M15 half-track with a 37mm automatic cannon and two .50-caliber machine guns alongside the cannon. This squad was served by seven men. Squad 2 was a half-track armed with four .50-caliber machine guns mounted on a power turret. This squad was served by five men. In the action, all weapons of the section's two squads were firing. We had enough fire-power when in action to neutralise whatever we aimed at. If you check the bunker you will still find the marks and indentations in the concrete from my .50-caliber machine guns.

'I have a pretty good idea of what happened on the boundaries of Easy Red Beach and the eastern section of Easy Green Beach which includes Exit E-1 and WN 65. I wouldn't take anything away from the suffering and valor the engineer men experienced. I certainly do not challenge the decorations they earned. I can tell you this: after 50 years, a lot of stories of exploits on D-Day are imagined.

'When I wrote to the American Battle Monuments Commission for permission to place the plaque above the firing aperture, I stated that "I am targeting the firing aperture of the bunker for the second time". I received permission to mount the plaque after providing positive proof such as I am providing you now.'

In *D-Day Then and Now* I also questioned the erection of monuments on the beachhead by follow-up units, as illustrated by the obelisk to the US 2nd Infantry Division which now overshadows the 467th plaque. This division did not land until D+1 and 2, and did not get its baptism of fire until June 9, so my question is: where does one draw the line? Surely the beach itself must be reserved for the assault formations, otherwise the list of units coming ashore later is endless. However, Mr Haas again disagreed with me.

'The 2nd Division men marched right into combat from Exit E-1. What's wrong with a monument to mark the jumping off point into a battle that would cause countless casualties during the horrible fighting in Normandy's hedgerows? Nothing in my opinion. Be that as it may, that didn't prevent a former officer of the 2nd Division, speaking at their monument near the bunker site during their 50th anniversary commemoration ceremony, quite brazenly state that a 2nd Infantry unit knocked out the bunker. There are more false claims.

'If you will note the bunker has a large chunk of concrete gouged out atop the roof on the left. Right after we had finished with the casemate, perhaps 10 or 15 minutes after, a navy shell landed atop the bunker with a terrific explosion. You can plainly see the results but, in spite of the tremendous force of that obvious high-caliber shell, all that happened to the bunker was that a piece of concrete was gouged out. Recently, I read a book that dealt with the US Navy's part of the D-Day action and lo and behold if there wasn't a section that shows a picture of "the bunker astride Exit E-1 with the caption claiming the Navy knocked out the bunker".'

Anyway, I extend my sincere apologies to the men of the 467th whose shot and shell-marks must certainly claim the E-1 casemate as their own for all time.

On the other hand, Laurie Goldstraw of Trinidad, a veteran of the Dieppe operation, felt the same way as I did concerning too many memorials. Laurie wrote to me to say that 'up to the mid-1960s, there was just a modest plaque on a plinth on the [Dieppe] promenade, but when I went back for the 50th anniversary, obelisks, granite stonework and much else had mushroomed. It is definitely something you can have too much of.'

Too many memorials? Apart from the 467th plaque, the casemate hosts a replacement for the Provisional Engineer's tablet, originally sited on the western face, and the 2nd Infantry Division memorial.

Dr Jim Purser, who himself fought in Belgium with the 8th Parachute Battalion, returned with other paras on an anniversary visit to the 'Bulge' battlefield in January 1995. *Left:* At Bure, he pictured Major Jack Watson, former OC of A Company of the 13th Parachute Battalion, at the entrance to the village, where there was a deep ditch at the side of the road in 1945. Here, A Company took cover after their dash down the slope on the right. The battle then continued up the road, house by house, many of which were on fire. *Right:* Ex-members of A Company seek out their old HQ, now marked with a plaque.

Before we leave the subject of memorials, Dr J. R. Purser of Chiseldon, Wiltshire, sent me a picture he had taken in the village of Bure in Belgium, on a return visit with the 13th Parachute Battalion (5th Parachute Brigade). The 6th Airborne Division had been rushed to the Ardennes from its base in Wiltshire on December 20, 1944 to help stem the tide of the German advance. The British XXX Corps was responsible for the tip of the 'Bulge' from Hotton in the north down to Dinant and southward to Bure.

'On January 3, 1945', writes Dr Purser, 'the 13th Battalion, with A Company leading (Major Jack Watson in command) were transported as far as the village of Resteigne. Here, at 8 a.m., they dismounted and commenced their march to the start line for the attack. The temperature was below freezing and the roads were icy; it was snowing and in some places the snow was 3–4 feet deep. Just before Bure, they turned south off the main road across a field, which was on a slope, to the woods some 100 yards above the road. Mortars and machine guns were mounted on trolleys and it was extremely difficult trying to haul these through the deep snow. It should be remembered that the battalion had not yet been issued with snow suits. By 1 p.m., A Company was on the start line along the edge of the woods. They were able to look down on the village where all was silent.

'As soon as they broke cover, they were immediately attacked by machine guns, suffering their first killed and injured. The firing came mainly from German armour on the high ground about half a mile away on the north side of the road. Major Watson ordered his men to race down the slope trying to keep under the fire, to the ditch on the side of the road, a distance of some 100 yards. There were inevitably more casualties. One man was hit by a bullet which ignited the phosphorus grenades that he was carrying and was screaming to be shot. He died later.

'By now, Major Watson had lost a third of A Company. Rallying his men, he attacked up the road toward the centre of the village, clearing the houses on either side. Bitter fighting ensued with the paras losing ground to counter-attacks and then gaining ground. No prisoners were taken. The enemy formation consisted of units from the Panzer-Lehr-Division. As soon as Major Watson realised he was up against enemy tanks, he informed Battalion Headquarters who sent forward C Squadron of the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry.

'As he fought his way along the main street, Major Watson established his HQ in a house on the left of the road. This later became a regimental aid post. By 5 p.m., and with nothing to eat all day, A Company reached the crossroads at the centre of the village — a distance of 400 yards. Throughout the night of the 3rd/4th, bitter fighting continued, with A Company continuing to take casualties. By morning, a company from the 2nd Battalion, The Oxford and Buckinghamshire Regiment, 6th Airlanding Brigade, arrived to reinforce the position on the crossroads. On the morning of January 4, the Ox and Bucks attacked up the Grupont road but were driven back. The following day, the enemy put in five further counter-attacks supported by tanks. However, a regiment of medium artillery began to make life unpleasant for the Germans. A Company, which had been reinforced by C Company, together with the Ox and Bucks, attacked up the road leading east to Grupont. With much hand-to-hand fighting and close-quarter fighting going on all day, the village was finally taken by 9 p.m.

'The battalion casualties amounted to seven officers and 182 soldiers. Of these, about 68 men had been killed — one half of these from A Company. The dead were buried in a field on the north side of the road leading up to Chapel Hill and about 100 yards from the convent. At a later date they were transferred to the British war cemetery at Hotton.

'A small monument was made intending to mark their initial resting place in the field, but instead this resides in the churchyard at the crossroads.'

Dr Purser: 'This is the field in Bure near the convent where the dead were initially buried and where the memorial should have been placed. Instead, it was erected in the churchyard at Bure crossroads.'

' A tale of two helmets', by Jeffrey Wilson, whose father, Arthur *(left)*, took the German helmet in Normandy. Now read on.

A nice D-Day sequel was sent to me by Mr J. J. Wilson of Langport, Somerset, who followed in his father's footsteps 50 years later.

'My late father was no stranger to combined operations, having landed in North Africa and later in Sicily where a photograph of him was published in the August 1943 edition of *Picture Post*, later reproduced in *After the Battle* No. 77, page 10, bottom left. In fact, he was an Assistant Military Landing Officer and closer examination of the photograph reveals "AMLO" on the sign.

'In 1944, he took part in Operation "Overlord", landing in the Jig Green sector of Gold Beach on D-Day, again as a member of a beach group. I have kept his landing maps together with photographs he took, against orders, ever since. He told me that he found a dead German "in a tennis court behind the beach where we landed" and, as a result, a steel helmet and belt came into his possession.

'I have often wondered where exactly this tennis court was and, in 1994, with the Military Vehicle Trust tour, I found myself camping just inland from Jig Green beach and, having taken copies of the maps and photographs with me, set about exploring in the style of *After the Battle*.

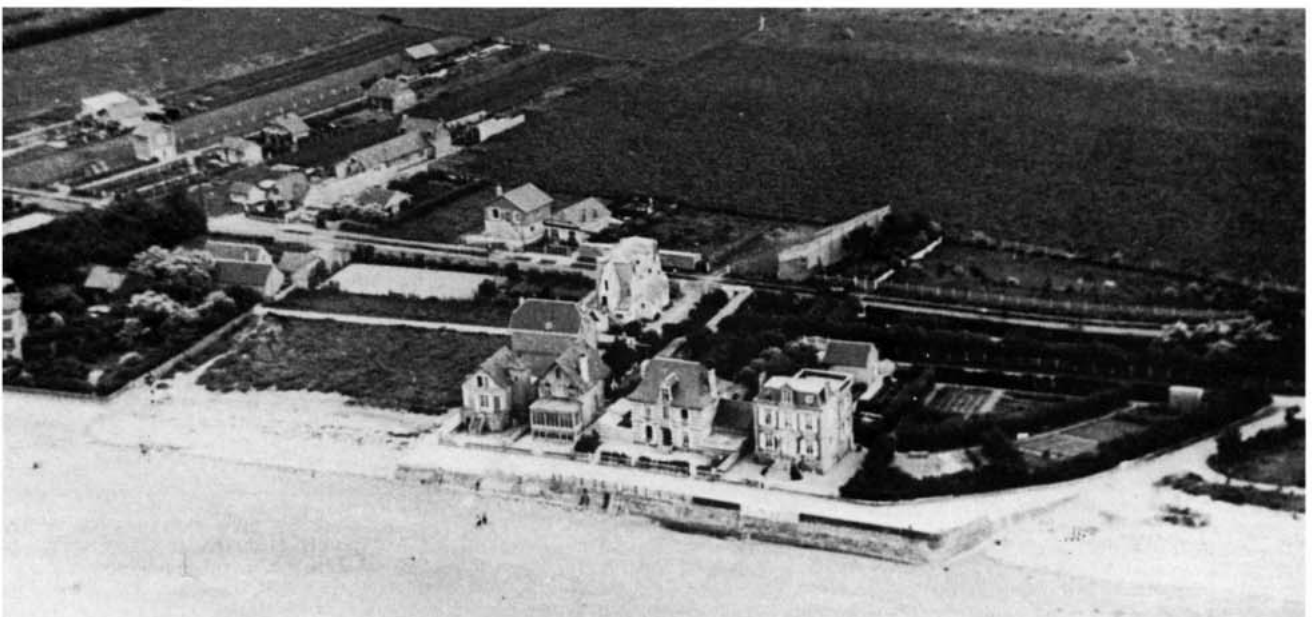
'The only tennis court in Asnelles was of post-war vintage but, thanks to the Mayor of Arromanches and a letter of introduction written by a local French lady, I finally found myself on the doorstep of a retired French fisherman. On reading my letter of introduction, he disappeared into a back room and reappeared with a 1939 aerial photograph of the seafront at Le Hamel. Clearly shown was the tennis court behind a small beach now lost under development. He kindly lent me the photographs to take to England and have copied, and readers familiar with Le Hamel will recognise the esplanade where there is now a blockhouse, the houses in the photograph having been demolished by the Germans to provide a good field of fire.

'Several days later, a group of us were driving around the lanes near Bayeux when we stopped to photograph a ruined church. A local lady approached us and gave a commentary on its history. Shortly she disappeared into her house to emerge with an old envelope from which she produced "souvenirs" consisting of various leaflets dropped by the RAF. We then realised that she wanted us to take them so, not wishing to offend, we took one each.

'At this stage, her husband appeared walking down the road wearing a British steel helmet but declined to be photographed wearing it. On showing it to me closely, we saw it had a bullet entry hole and two large exit holes. He then thrust it to me and said "souvenir". I must admit we were all a little overcome to think that this total stranger wanted me to have something that he had kept for 50 years — a piece of military equipment which had been worn by a total stranger, who had paid the price of our freedom.

'When I look at the two helmets now, I can imagine the two wearers were probably not far apart in age, attitude or outlook, both with brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, but that Fate dictated that they ended up on the opposite sides of a terrible conflict which we hope will never occur again.'

Following in his father's footsteps, Jeffrey obtained this pre-war aerial photo of the seafront at Le Hamel showing the location of the tennis court where his father had relieved the dead German of his helmet. By 1944, this was the western end of strong point WN 37. (See *D-Day Then and Now*, Volume 2, page 421.)

ROYAL NORFOLK REGIMENT- 1939-1945 PAGE 1

ABBOTT, L, 5780157, Private, 08/02/1942, SINGAPORE MEMORIAL, Column 49.,
ABEL, R J, 5775608, Corporal, 03/11/1943, CHUNGKAI WAR CEMETERY, 6. K. 14.,
ABELL, W E, 5773570, Private, 22/01/1942, KRANJI WAR CEMETERY PART 1, Coll. Grave 34. E. 1-8.,
ABLETT, J R J J, 5774222, Private, 04/11/1939, THURLTON (ALL SAINTS) CHURCHYARD, ,
ABRAHAM, K A, 5775372, Lance Corporal, 15/02/1942, SINGAPORE MEMORIAL, Column 48.,
ABRAHAMS, V J D, 5775331, Private, 05/05/1943, KANCHANABURI WAR CEMETERY, 2. O. 62.,
ABREY, C J, 5779106, Private, 12/06/1943, KANCHANABURI WAR CEMETERY, 2. M. 36.,
ADCOCK, D F, 5778168, Private, 26/01/1942, SINGAPORE MEMORIAL, Column 49.,
ADDY, G D, 14675687, Private, 01/03/1945, REICHSWALD FOREST WAR CEMETERY, 62. D. 9.,
AGGAS, J W, 5778171, Private, 26/01/1942, SINGAPORE MEMORIAL, Column 49.,
AINGER, P W, 5778922, Private, 11/02/1942, SINGAPORE MEMORIAL, Column 49.,

With all its casualty records on a Hewlett Packard Unix mini-computer, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission are now able to search the database using various criteria. For example, this facsimile print-out lists all the casualties of the Royal Norfolk Regiment.

The welcome news came in November 1995 that the computerisation of the records of the 1.7 million British and Commonwealth casualties killed in both world wars has now been completed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission which received 40,000 enquiries in the last year alone. As well as providing a quicker and more effective casualty tracing service for the public, the new database will now allow the Commission to deal with an additional range of specialised requests, i.e. searching for casualties by regiment, by date, etc., although it is anticipated that a charge would have to be made for sophisticated requests. The address of the CWGC is 2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 2DX.

Peter Cliff of 95 Derby Lane, Liverpool, L13 6QF wrote to me in June 1994 bringing to my attention a documentary called *Fields of Armour* which he had seen on the Discovery channel of his local cable TV network. He said it covered the battle of Normandy and the Falaise Gap and that it included an 11-second shot showing Michael Wittmann (issue 48) riding a tank, supposedly along the hedgerows near Villers-Bocage. Peter would be interested to hear from any other readers who saw the film or can comment about it.

Further to our feature on SHAEF's headquarters in issue 84, Ray Sauvey, General Manager of the National Railroad Museum at Green Bay, Wisconsin, wrote giving further details on Eisenhower's train.

'Shortly after the Americans entered the war', writes Ray, 'the private car "Joan" was put at the disposal of American officers travelling in Britain, particularly General Frank S. Ross [chief of transportation]. Churchill and other officials also used it. Major General (retired) Hugh Foster has supplied us with documents showing the "Alive" command train of October 1942 to consist of the following Great Western units: brake third #601, sleeping car #9093, sleeping car #9079, restaurant car #9673, conference car #9364, third #574 and brake third #1647. The document states that this train was built at Swindon for Eisenhower.

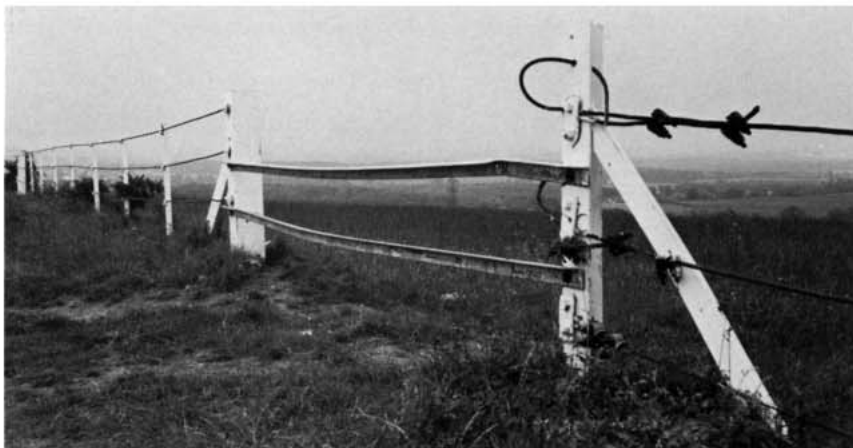
'This is borne out by a 1945 *Equipment Data Book* issued by the Military Railway Service (US). The above units are assigned to special train A-1 along with #1591, a sleeping car converted from third class coach; #4329, a boiler car converted from passenger car #121; and automobile cars #483 and #485. Both #1591 and #574 are listed as having armor-plating.

'Special train A-2 consisted of Belgian baggage car #1234, LNER boiler car #3510, Wagon Lits sleeping cars #3539 and #3547, French personnel car #11511, Wagon Lits dining car #4050, Wagon Lits conference car #4159, LNER sleeping car #1592 and utility car #593.

'Apparently #1591 and #1592 were Ike's personal cars, code-named "Bayonet II" and "Bayonet" respectively. "Bayonet" was delivered in February or March 1944, and "Bayonet II" possibly in February 1945. Both had the same interior configuration. Four bedrooms were removed to form a conference room. The two bedrooms behind that were combined for the General's use, one room was converted to a shower and there was an attendants' room.

'We have always assumed that the cars travelled together but this may not have been true. Our latest thinking is that train A-1 with #1591, which was armor-plated, was used on the Continent while train A-2 with #1592 was used by Ike when he was in England. This assumes the armored car would have been used on the Continent while the unarmored one would have remained in England. Offsetting this thinking is the fact that #1592 appears in the consist with the Belgian and French equipment.'

An interesting postscript concerning Eisenhower's railway carriage, No. 1592, donated to the National Railroad Museum at Green Bay, Wisconsin, by the British Railways Board in 1964, is that the official presentation by HRH Prince Philip was not only held in Ike's office (see page 24 of issue 84), but that the train was parked at Kensington Olympia which was Eisenhower's wartime station.

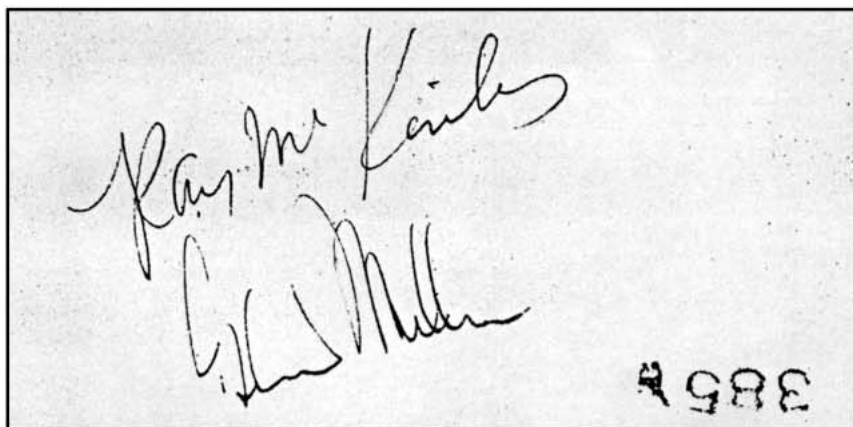
Geoffrey Laxton of Portsmouth also made an interesting comment about the picture on page 35 of that issue illustrating one of the gateposts to 'Sharpener'. Sending me a photo of a similar metal post further along the lane, Geoffrey wrote that 'I think you may have been misled by an enterprising farmer. About 1970/80s, the Central Electricity Generating Board dismantled one of the two overhead grid lines and pylons which ran north/south up Portsdown Hill to Wymering, just over the hill. The farmer cut up the pylons together with the cable and used them, amongst other things, for fencing the field adjoining Pigeon House Lane, just to the west of Fort Widley. The photo looks very similar to this fencing which is still in use; very sturdy with the girder sections painted white! I think the give-aways are the holes in the girder, the cable and method of attachment which appears the same, and Pigeon House Lane passes "Shipmate's" entrance!'

The tell-tale fence posts on Portsdown Hill pictured by Geoffrey Laxton.

Ron Manning sent me several interesting snapshots he had taken when he was working (as a civilian) with US forces in Bushy Park at Teddington, Middlesex. ***Left:*** **'That's me in the white pullover in the front row', Ron explained. 'I was also there when Glenn Miller came to play. The only piece of paper I had with me was this photo** ***(right)*****, which I think shows General Eaker's staff car, so I got Glenn and Ray McKinley to autograph the back of it.'** ***(below)***

Also writing concerning issue 84 was Mr R. A. C. Manning of Keyworth, Nottinghamshire, who said that during the war, he was employed on the civilian staff of the US VIII Air Force Service Command in the Post Office depot at Bushy Park and later in the PX running a Coca-Cola bar. He recalled the flying bomb striking close to Bushy Park, and also witnessed the subsequent parade when Purple Hearts were issued to those who had been injured.

The staff at Bushy Park are extremely enthusiastic over preserving and displaying material and artefacts concerning the wartime history of the USAAF and SHAEF at Camp Griffiss and any readers who want to get involved should telephone Sheila Barrs on 0181-979 1586.

Our new book is *Glenn Miller in Britain Then and Now* by Chris Way. For the first time, the venues for all the concerts the band gave in Britain between July and December 1944 have been listed and illustrated in our usual style. People were always wanting to know exactly where Glenn and the band played so here is the answer. We have been able to pinpoint the actual building or hangar in which the performance was held in 99.9 per cent of the venues and have found contemporary photographs for the majority of the locations.

I have also included in the book a short chapter on the final flight (see also issue 2) but both Chris and I agreed not to get embroiled in all the speculation and fanciful theories which have emerged in recent years concerning Glenn Miller's death. However, readers who want to consider all the arguments might consult Wilber Wright's privately published books, *Millergate* and *The Glenn Miller Burial File*. (Available from the author at Allington Lane, Southampton, SO3 3HP.)

This was an amazing coincidence for we had been working for the past nine months on a book (authorised by Steven D. Miller, Glenn's son, on behalf of the Miller Estate) which would list and illustrate all Glenn Miller's concert venues in Britain. The Bushy Park performance took place on Wednesday, August 9, 1944. After Glenn's disappearance, Sergeant Ray McKinley directed the band and also led the post-war Miller orchestra from 1956 to 1965. He died last year (May 1995).

Another Second World War event which refuses to lie down is the flight of Rudolf Hess, included in issue 58 in November 1987. I think we covered most of the controversy in our follow-up in issue 66, pages 35-39, where I also gave Professor Hugh Thomas space to state his argument. However, the professor's claim that the Hess in Spandau was a double, because the man he examined there did not have the scar from a bullet wound sustained by the real Hess in the First World War, was well and truly shot down in flames in the BBC Timewatch investigation *An Edge of Conspiracy* broadcast on January 17, 1990. The programme's researchers found Hess's 1917 hospital records clearly stating the small size of the wound, the scar from which would have shrunk to nothing after 70 years.

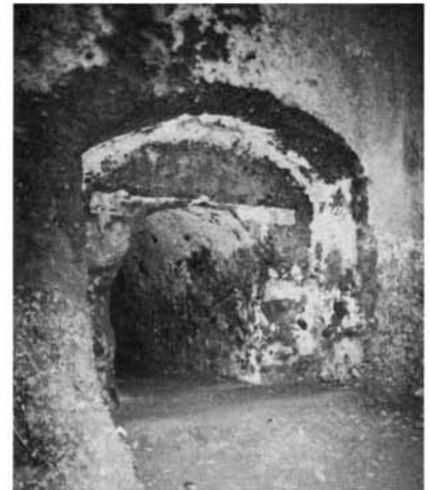
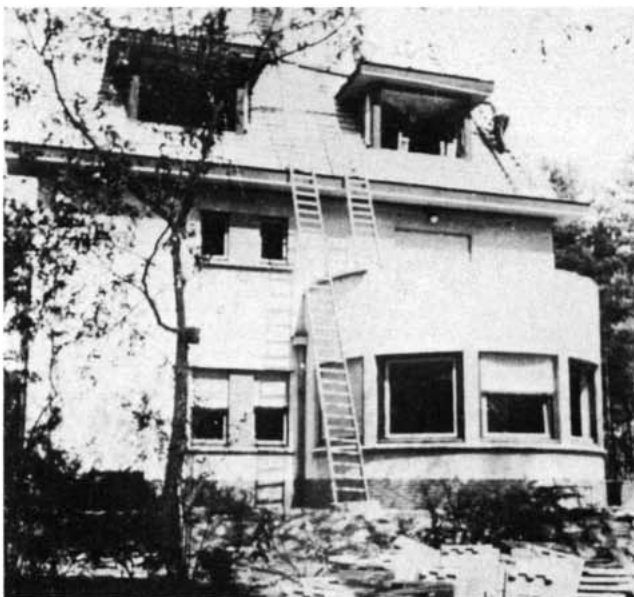
We also ought to mention that John McBlain has published what he refers to as 'the most important new piece on Hess in the last 25 years'. Called *Rudolf Hess The British Conspiracy*, it is available from Jema Publications, 40 Ashley Lane, Moulton, Northampton, NN3 7TJ.

Finally, Chris Elliott has parted with Hess's oxygen mask (see issue 58, page 10) which he obtained from the farmer David McLean in the 1950s. It was sold via Malcolm Fisher at Regimentals to a US collector.

From Europe ***(above)*** **to the Far East** ***(below)*** **— David Green's interest in the Second World War has taken him round the globe. I first met David when he was working several years ago in an East London hospital; now he has returned to his native Australia. 'This Christmas', he said in December 1995, 'I think I'll go to Guadalcanal!'**

David Green of Victoria, Australia, who is a regular contributor to *After the Battle*, after a European tour in 1994, sent me some very interesting photographs that he had taken in Nuremberg. There, the local authorities had erected large wartime pictures on the standpoint of the original photographer corresponding with the present-day view — a real-life 'then and now' project. It is surprising we have not seen more of this in other towns and cities.

David also enclosed some prints from a recent foray into Indonesia. 'Apart from some counterfeit samurai swords and a couple of ex-Japanese aircraft in the huge army museum in Jakarta, I came across next to nothing from the '42 to '45 Japanese occupation except for some caves. Located near Dago, outside Bandung on the island of Java, are these former Japanese munitions caves? The area is inside a national park and the caves themselves are a minor tourist attraction for the Javanese themselves.'

'In my article "Antwerp, City of Sudden Death" in issue 57, I described the crash of a V1 at Schoten (Antwerp) during the German occupation, which was not generally known', wrote Achiel Rely of Mortsel, Belgium. 'In January 1995, I received a 'phone call from someone from Belgian TV asking if I could indicate the exact spot where the V-weapon had come down. Together with a camera team of BRTN, we managed not only to find the same villa and the garden in which the V1 had exploded, but also the son of the family who was living there in the summer of 1944. The exact date was July 10, and he clearly remembered the roof, windows and curtains suffering severe damage.'

Above: **Achiel Rely, right, who witnessed what he thought was the first V1 to land in the Antwerp area on a date he has now established as July 10, 1944 — a full three months before the main campaign against the city began — with Anton Seghers, then 12 years old.** *Left:* **Anton lived in this house in Schoten, badly damaged in the blast.**

'Never before was so much owed by so many to so few.' Thus reads the original inscription on John Studd's headstone; now Mr and Mrs Joe Mortimer help repay the debt in Touchen End Churchyard at Bray in Berkshire.

Joe Mortimer of Bracknell, Berkshire, wrote to say that 'My wife, knowing me to be very interested in the Battle of Britain, brought home your book from the local library, from which we discovered that not far away, about five miles from where I live, a young fighter pilot [Pilot Officer J. A. P. Studd, killed on August 19, 1940] lay buried. We therefore set off to find the grave and, on arrival, were horrified to find it well and truly overgrown.

'Since that day, we have taken it upon ourselves to tend the brave young airman's plot, also that of his grandparents' grave next to his. To us, it is not only a labour of love, so to speak, but also a demonstration of our gratitude and respect for one so young, a debt we can never repay. We shall be visiting the churchyard again and also on the anniversary of VE-Day.'

In issue 2, back in 1973, I mentioned that Bill Townley of Stoke-on-Trent had made an 8mm 'cinemascope' film about Lance-Sergeant John Baskeyfield's exploit at Arnhem which resulted in his being awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. Filmed near Tean in Staffordshire, using tanks, weaponry and a large cast of volunteer actors, Bill created a unique 80-minute film but, with only one projection copy, it was never able to be widely circulated. Now Ray Johnson Productions of 3 Primrose Hill, Hanford, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8QT, have transferred it to video, cassettes in the PAL format being available from that address, price £15.99 including postage.

A very interesting article in *The Independent Magazine* caught my eye in June 1995 as it covered the reminiscences of a Soviet war photographer. It turned out that many of the photographs I included in *Berlin Then and Now* which we had obtained from the East German photo agency ADN (now incorporated into the Bundesarchiv) had been taken by him. Yevgeny Khaldei explained that he wanted a Soviet flag to symbolise the fall of Berlin but there were none available at the front. Therefore, when he flew to Moscow on April 22, 1945 with exposed film, he asked the storeman at Tass (the Soviet press agency) if he had a flag he could take back, but all that was available were red tablecloths. 'I asked him for three', said Khaldei. 'He asked me why but I said it was a military secret. He then said I could only have them for a few days and he made me sign for them.'

Above: **'Tablecloth' Hammer and Sickle over the Tempelhof terminal building in Berlin. The photographer, Yevgeny Khaldei, now sets the record straight over the identity of the flag-raisers in the symbolic Reichstag pictures** ***(below).***

Khaldei was staying with his uncle, who was a tailor, and he sat up all night sewing on the hammer and sickle — one possible explanation why the emblem appears in a variety of different sizes in the photographs.

He flew the first tablecloth beside the eagle on the roof of Tempelhof airfield (page 193) and a second on the Brandenburg Gate (page 449). Khaldei then went to the Reichstag: 'I said to the guys who were following me, let's go to the top and do it. So we went up the main staircase, letting off a burst [of fire] on each floor to make sure the Nazis kept their heads down. The history books [and *Berlin Then and Now*, page 240] say that the flag was placed by Mikhail Kantaria, assisted by Mikhail Yegorov and Konstantin Samsonov. But it wasn't true', says Khaldei. 'The actual soldier holding the flag was called Alexei Kovalyov and the soldier hanging onto his legs to stop him falling off was a guy from Daghestan whose name I never got.'

Khaldei then went to the Reich Chancellery. 'It was extraordinary, as if the place had been a medal factory. I thought, well, we've swept away the Nazis and now we'd better sweep up their medals. There was a soldier with me called Gorogulya. He found a broom and I got a roll of him tidying the place up' (page 302).

'When I flew back to Moscow with the pictures, they wanted the tablecloths back. The storeman, Lubinsky, exploded: "I don't care where you left them. Just get them back here at once!"'

The *U-534* pictured by Pår Nilsson on dry land at Grenå, Denmark. It appears that its ultimate fate is still in the balance.

In issue 83, we covered the recovery of *U-534* in August 1993 but had to leave the story at the point where the U-Boat had been towed to the Danish North Sea port of Hirtshals. At the time of going to press, its final resting place was not known, but early in 1994 there were rumours that Liverpool had made a play to obtain the wreck for display in their city. It would undoubtedly be an additional attraction to set alongside the Western Approaches HQ (issue 81), but to date no firm plans have been released.

Meanwhile, several readers tracked its present location down to the harbour at Grenå on the Jutland east coast, and both Pår Nilsson of Gothenburg, Sweden, and Peter Thompson of Halifax sent me photographs.

However, it seems that others are after even bigger fish! In November 1995, Brian Guffie of Kilbirnie, Ayrshire, sent me a very interesting cutting from his local paper. The report stated that a group of ex-Royal Navy officers had received permission from the Ministry of Defence to raise up to a 100 of the U-Boats scuttled in Operation 'Deadlight' (see issue 36). The submarines, ranging from 790 to 2200 tonnes, are lying 30 miles off the northern coast of Ireland in at least 300 feet of water. It appears that the price of scrap now makes recovery of the vessels economically viable, the plan being to take the wrecks to a disused mine near the Sullom Voe oil terminal in the Shetland Islands (see issue 67) where they would be broken up for salvage. The scrap — some 150,000 tonnes of it — would then be sold back to the Germans!

Tracing the whereabouts of significant wartime relics today can be a frustrating exercise. Wiktor Kurowski, who authored our story on Westerplatte in issue 65, would dearly love to find out what happened to the Polish 37mm anti-tank gun which German marines took as a war trophy. Wiktor says that this particular unit went on to take part in the conquest of France, and ended up by occupying Cherbourg, so this picture could well have been taken there. But what happened to the gun?

The Dutch magazine *Automobiel* asked the same question concerning the BMW 326 convertible in which SS-General Rauter was shot (issue 56). At war's end, the car ended up in a captured vehicle dump from where it was bought up by Piet Boekestijn of Messrs Boekestijn breaker's yard in Maasland (west of Rotterdam). We contacted the Boekestijns for further details. Patched up and redone in civilian colours in the early 1950s, the car was first used by Mr Klaas Keijzer and then by a member of the family, Niek Boekestijn. There is no doubt that it was the actual Rauter car, for the family clearly remembers the many bits of tape which covered the bullet holes in the seats. Eventually left in the yard, it survived all clean-ups for some 20 years. By then, it was so rusty the bullet holes in the body had begun to show up again. In 1976 the car was sold to a private collector, so it could well still exist today. Though many thousands of BMW 326s were built in 1939-40, this one would certainly be a prize one to preserve.

Where are they now? This BMW 326 coupe, pictured being used by the Boekestijn family in 1956, is actually the one in which SS-General Rauter was ambushed on March 6/7, 1945. (Courtesy P. Boekestijn)

Official vandalism. A genuine D-Day war horse scrapped in 1995 by the Musée du Débarquement (Landing Museum) at Arromanches.

While efforts are made on the one hand to preserve particular artefacts, others are being wilfully destroyed — sometimes officially! I just could not believe it when compiling a list of genuine D-Day relics to be seen preserved today in Normandy, to find that the landing craft LCA 1825, which had been displayed at Arromanches for many years, was scrapped in the spring of 1995. Its provenance could be traced to the invasion, yet the museum told us it had become too costly to maintain. (They are now looking for another one to replace it!)

Then, Brian Guffie of Kilbirnie, Ayrshire, sent me photos of 'an old 1940 motor torpedo boat which had been converted during WWII to an air-sea rescue craft. It is at the Scottish Maritime Museum at Irvine, Ayrshire, but', wrote Brian, 'I was upset to hear from one of the staff that it was soon to be destroyed. In my opinion, it is a shame that such a veteran of the war should be scrapped because of some holes inside. It could be repaired and I even offered to paint it myself, but to no avail.'

Alan Tomkins of Kings Langley, Buckinghamshire (who readers may recall has worked on several war films including *A Bridge Too Far* (issue 17), *The Heroes of Telemark* (issue 45) and *The Memphis Belle* (issue 69)), was up in Scotland in 1994 making *Rob Roy* when he came across a WWII restoration project. 'I drove past this craft every day to one of our locations', wrote Alan, 'and I became suspicious of any German Customs in 1942, but I have since found out that it *is* German and the owner has lots of documentation to prove it. He bought it for £1,000 after the previous owner removed the twin Mercedes engines.'

And another naval vessel was spotted in Iceland by Erik Skytte of Hillerød, Denmark. 'I take the opportunity to send you a photo which I took in Mjóifjördur (Narrow Fiord) in Eastern Iceland and which apparently shows a relic from WWII when Allied troops were stationed there. Around the year 1900, some 300 people were living in Mjóifjördur, mostly by fishing, but now the whole population consists only of about 30 people and there is no longer any fishing. Locals told me that for a few years, when fishing was still the main occupation, the vessel in the photo was used for shipping fish offal to a train-oil factory in a neighbouring fiord, but since then, and for a great number of years, it has just been left to rust.'

Above: **Also under sentence of death: an old air-sea rescue launch pictured at the Scottish Maritime Museum by Brian Guffie.** *Below:* **Also in Scotland, Alan Tomkins spotted this German customs boat while driving to one of the locations in the 1995 film *Rob Roy* (the one where Rob's first house by the sea, specially built by the film company, is pillaged and fired). The boat lies on the shore of Loch Nan Uamh on the A830.** *Below left:* **The landing craft spotted by Erik Skytte in Iceland.**

Battlefield exploration in suburban England — at Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Entering the tunnel complex via Blockhouse B *(left)*, Steve Sullivan investigated the interior and drew up this sketch plan. *Below:* The interior is partially flooded, so would-be explorers are warned. This picture was taken at Point 4 in the main tunnel.

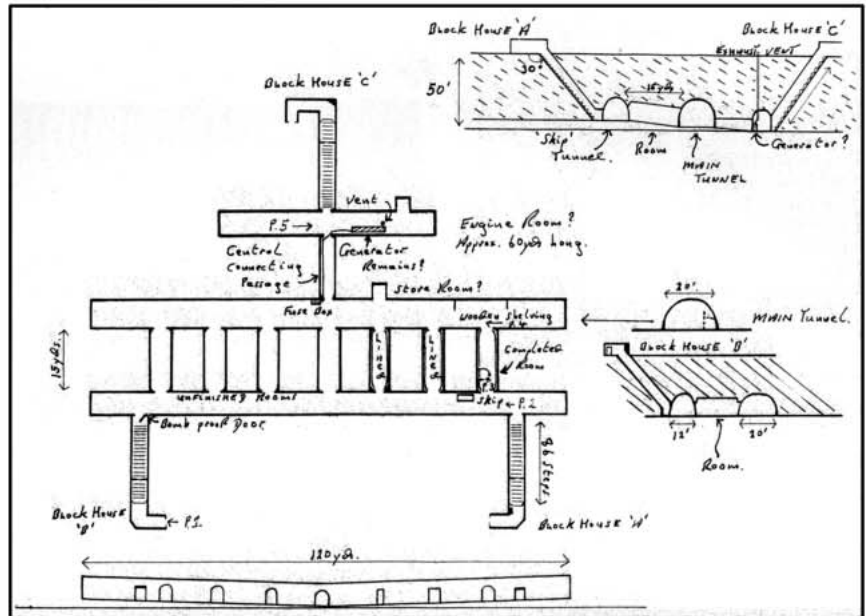
Steve Sullivan of Crowborough, West Sussex, wrote in October 1994 to tell me of his investigation into a vast bunker complex dubbed 'The Wilderness' which had been dug into the hillside in Tunbridge Wells, almost opposite No. 10 Broadwater Down, where Montgomery had his HQ when in command of XII Corps in 1941.

'Having an over-inquisitive mind regarding military remains, I am always on the lookout for the unusual. So I first entered the interior in 1989 and, despite partial flooding, we got around by rubber dinghy to explore its vast, dark depths. From what we saw, it appears that the bunker was never completed. Of the seven chambers (see my plan) only two were concrete-lined. The rest remain quite bare, but in one a builders' skip remains as left in 1942.

'It appears that the work was carried out by the 172nd Tunnelling Company who worked on the project for a year before being sent to Gibraltar (see *After the Battle* No. 21). Two diesel generators were installed in 1942 and a local electrician was brought in to connect into the National Grid.

'In 1946, the whole complex was stripped and bricked up, but by 1979 it had been broken into and the local paper carried out an investigation to warn parents of the dangers of letting children play inside. Its purpose is still not clear yet it remains a fascinating piece of Second World War architecture.'

In issue 78, published in November 1993, David Green (see above) told the story of the invasion of Peleliu, but his exploration of the interior of the island, through the rampant jungle, was limited by the time he had available. Early the following year, Professor Stuart D. Scott of the Department of Anthropology at the University at Buffalo (New York State) gave me details of their proposed forensic study of the remains preserved in caves sealed since 1944. He explained that funding such a research project was the main problem but he hoped that it would go forward in conjunction with the Pacific Society of Japan and the University of Guam.

Meanwhile, the US Marine Corps stole a march on the academics by mounting their own Peleliu Battle Study from June 25–July 2, 1995. Scott Haralson, stationed in Okinawa, is no stranger to exploring battlefields as he has accompanied Marty Black of Crystal Lake, Illinois, on several explorations on Okinawa (see issue 85, page 5). Scott wrote that 'in summary, the PBS was a great success. I'd never been there before so everywhere I went and everything I saw was new to me. I had also never been to an "untouched" battle site before. While Iwo Jima is fairly well preserved, much of it has been cleaned up and the hazards of ordnance taken care of for the most part. Not so over much of Peleliu. Every place we went, unexploded ordnance of one sort or another awaited us.

'Also, the caves of Peleliu, while very similar in style and construction to those of Okinawa, abound with discarded military debris. Japanese helmets and canteens littered the floors of most of the caves. Bottles and gas mask equipment lay everywhere we looked. Just beneath the surface of the caves, I discovered many human remains and the accompanying personal items. Some of these included tooth brushes, mirrors, razors, soap dishes, eye glasses, fountain pens, coins, buttons, an incon stamp, at least two ID disks and numerous other odds and ends.

Battlefield exploration in the central Pacific — the US Marines return to Peleliu.

Gunnery Sergeant Scott K. Haralson, currently serving with a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEUs are self-sustaining combat units based on amphibious 'carriers'), at the entrance to a cave on the China Wall. Although Scott is primarily interested in artillery, his intense interest in WWII has led him to get involved in Marine Corps' battlefield study groups. His fascinating Peleliu After Action Report ran to 12 pages.

'June 28, Reveille 0500. We checked out several caves along the China Wall. All of them were man-made with good openings but limited length. In one of them, about 75 meters or so from Colonel Nakagawa's last HQ cave, we found a Japanese helmet, three canteens, a number of gas mask canisters, a tape measure land mine and a never-before-seen glass canteen with a form-fitted rubber cover. I fell in love with the glass canteen but could only photograph it as I was concerned about trying to get away with such a large item. But I did manage to uncover a Japanese ID tag under just about two inches of sand near the back of the cave.'

'As for the jungle of Peleliu, I found it to be actually more hospitable than the bush here in Okinawa. While the daytime temperature remained constant at about 85 degrees with high humidity, the lack of mosquitoes and other "creatures" kept our discomfort to a minimum. Also the lack of venomous snakes on Peleliu made hiking in the bush a carefree exercise free of anxiety about what might be lurking below our knees.

'Sleeping at night was a challenge because of nearly nightly showers which even the most water resistant tents couldn't seem to repel. If not rain then the still evening heat tended to keep us tossing and turning making sleep a sweaty, uncomfortable goal.

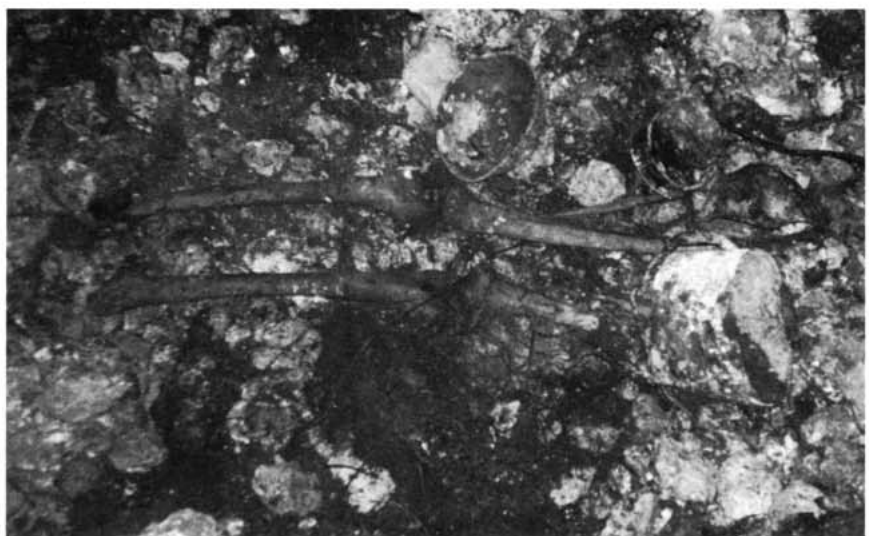
'Hiking in the thick jungle growth of Peleliu in itself was not difficult. The difficulty lay in the steep, jagged terrain comprised of broken, irregular coral ridges, deep defiles and rugged ravines. The Umurbrogols are as forbidding to hikers as they were to infantrymen 51 years ago, with the wonderful exception that we weren't being shot at while we tried to negotiate our way through the maze of natural obstacles.

'The jungle also had the added bonus of concealing many wonderful finds. Penetrating deep into the ridges never failed to reveal American equipment hidden in half a century by the thick foliage. Time and again, we stumbled upon American and Japanese helmets just lying on the floor of the jungle. American canteens and mess kit tops materialized often from the undergrowth or lay resting on rocks just off our paths. These paths followed nothing but our intentions. Nearly everywhere in the Umurbrogols, we blazed our own trails and cut bush in search of specific terrain features or caves.

'The condition of American canteens in the jungle was remarkable. I estimate that in one day alone transiting the Umurbrogols from Bloody Nose Ridge, through the Five Brothers to just past Boyd's Ridge to end up at the East Road, I could have collected ten or more American and Japanese canteens lying about on the floor of the jungle. All of them would have been "keepers" and about half of them would have borne the scars of battle from bullet or shell fragments. Many of the helmets we discovered would also have been "restorable" even though heavily rusted and weakened.

'I was surprised several times to find pieces of aircraft in the jungle. One day, while searching for a cave discovered the day before, we found about half a dozen good-sized pieces of aluminum wing section and control surfaces from what we believe to be either F6Fs of F4Us. Most had the original paint intact and one even had a very easy to read "US Navy" painted on the underside.

'As I mentioned before, ordnance was everywhere in the hills. Everything from 500lb bombs to 3.5-inch bazooka rockets, and rifle grenades to naval and artillery shells, lay almost anywhere I looked in the jungle. The caves, too, were littered with grenades, rifle ammo and the occasional land mine.

'Like Okinawa, the locals of Peleliu don't appear to visit the caves often if at all. None of the caves I saw had any modern trash inside. However, it does appear that someone has collected weapons from the caves over the years. The profusion of canteens and helmets tell me that people haven't recovered very much. They also haven't dug below the surface. In almost every case where I took the time to "dig" into the present-day cave floor, I was rewarded by finding some personal items left behind by Japanese soldiers. Out of a dozen or so caves I entered, I found notable human remains in a least five of them. And in three of those we recovered two Japanese dog-tags and an ivory incon name stamp. It seems that no one before has bothered to look under the dirt.'

'June 29, Reveille 0530. We were in the field by about 0650 and four of us got a ride up to "The Horseshoe". We had split our four-man team up to search the area and one of the Gunnys in the other group stumbled onto a cave high on a ridge. He said there were remains inside. . . . Then he held up a Japanese brass dog-tag.'

Scott's friend Marty Black (see above) is also steeped with the exploration of battlefields, and when the opportunity came to join a party of veterans returning to Iwo Jima (issue 82) for the 50th anniversary, he jumped at the chance.

Iwo is now a Japanese military base, with no civilian flights, so the 900-strong party had to be flown in from Guam and Saipan in six Boeing 727s. There is no overnight accommodation on the island, so the US Navy had shipped in trucks by landing craft to transport the veterans around the island just for the day. Although the time on Iwo was frustratingly limited, nevertheless, Marty said, 'there were also at least three guys like me — WWII buffs — just going along to meet the vets and take advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to set foot on Iwo Jima. (I should mention that *every* other vet I met seemed thrilled that people of my generation had enough interest in their sacrifices and the ordeal of WWII to make this trip.)

'Two vets, brothers, who were both on Iwo at the same time, wore their original Iwo helmets (with covers) and two-piece camouflage outfits from Guadalcanal! One was "brown side out", and one was "green side out". They were both still skinny, and the uniforms fitted fine; in fact, they were baggy! One guy had brought along the helmet that he was wearing when he took a Jap bullet in the head! It went in the front, near the top, and exited at the rear. Tore the canvas webbing in the liner, and also holed his "overseas cap" which was tucked up in there. The bullet only creased the top of his head but bullet fragments (and probably helmet fragments) slid down the gap between the steel pot and the fiberglass liner and hit him in the back of the neck!

'Chuck Lindberg, who was the flame-thrower operator in the first flag-raising atop Mt Suribachi, was also on the tour. He's in several of Lou Lowery's photos, and is the last survivor of the two flag-raising teams, after second flag-raiser, Navy Corpsman John Bradley, died in January 1994. I was surprised to learn that a full flame-thrower backpack tank only held six full seconds of napalm. They spent a lot of time refilling those things! In fact, Chuck had walked down the mountain to refill, when he was hit and evacuated (he had been previously wounded in the knee by mortar shrapnel on Guadalcanal), and he didn't learn of the second flag-raising and famous Joe Rosenthal photo until he was on a hospital ship! His reaction, when shown the Rosenthal photo, was: "No, that ain't the flag-raising on Suribachi. I know; I was there!"

'All told, during the entire Iwo trip, I met virtually every MOS [Military Occupational Specialty] there was during the battle. Riflemen, BAR-men, light machine gunners, ammo-bearers, mortar-men, a bazookaman, corpsmen, litter-bearers, radio men, artillery FOs and 105 gunners, 37mm gunners, Naval gun-fire and air strike liaison guys, truck drivers, a (black) DUKW driver, engineers, airport construction men and demolition experts, sailors (two from the carrier *Bismark Sea*, sunk by a kamikaze), airmen, and Army troops, etc., etc. (I didn't realize that the Army had so many troops there.) All had their stories; unfortunately, I've probably forgotten most of them already.'

Return to the sands of Iwo Jima. On Tuesday, March 14, 1995, Marty Black *(below)* achieved one of his lifetime's ambitions when he joined six planeloads of American veterans revisiting the tiny island they captured 50 years before after a bitter five-week battle. He sent us a nice souvenir — a phial of the legendary black sand!

***Left:* Brothers Bob and Gov Barnett were dressed suitably for the occasion and Homer Cross *(centre)* had brought his helmet with its near-fatal bullet hole. *Right:* Chuck Lindberg came to show his wife where he had planted the first Stars and Stripes.**

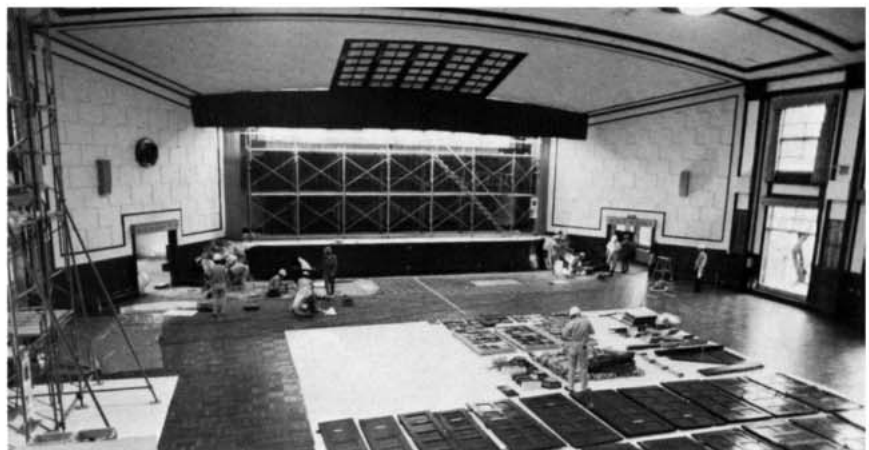
Left: **Colonel Paul Tibbets with the *Enola Gay* which he piloted over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. Fifty years later, as the aircraft was being prepared *(right)* at Suitland, Maryland, for exhibition at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, the fall-out continued. Veterans criticised the Smithsonian's 'revisionist historians', one congressman accusing the museum of wanting to turn the exhibit into 'a politically-correct diatribe on the nuclear age'.**

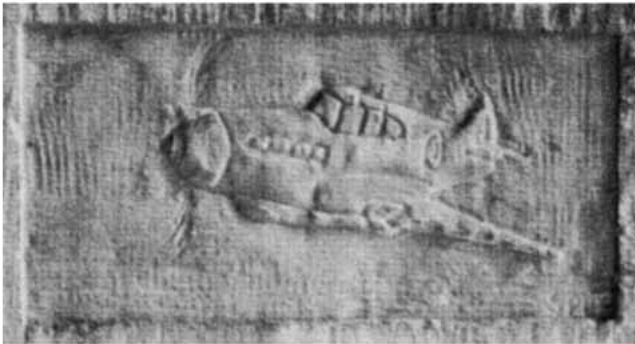
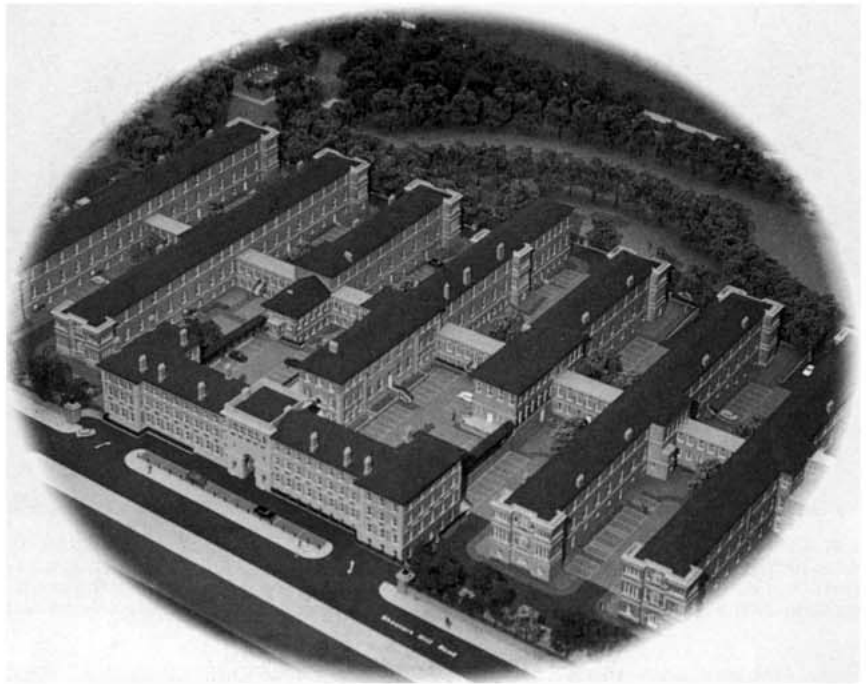
The most ridiculous anniversary affair that I have ever come across was the row which rumbled on for more than a year at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, concerning the display of the B-29 *Enola Gay* which dropped the first atomic bomb (issue 41). We really do not have the space to go into the minutiae of the argument, but basically what should have been the simple exhibition of an historic WWII aircraft degenerated into a slanging match between the museum administration and American veterans with, in the end, Members of Congress adding their voices to press for the resignation of the museum director, Martin Harwit. The disagreement centred over the accompanying wording for the display which originally stated: 'For most Americans, it was a war of vengeance. For most Japanese, it was a war to defend their unique culture against Western imperialism.' Veterans took umbrage because, they said, it made them appear the villains and the Japanese innocent victims.

For months, US newspapers regurgitated the arguments, all the more stupid because *Bockscar*, which dropped the second bomb, has been on display in the US Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, since 1961 without arousing any controversy. In the end, Martin Harwit resigned his post in May 1995, the exhibit going ahead with just the fuselage being put on display with no commentary at all! If any readers are interested in reading more, a full-length book has been brought out on the subject by Marlow & Company in New York. Titled *Judgement at the Smithsonian*, edited by Philip Nobile, it claims to be the 'banned history — the uncensored script of the Smithsonian's 50th anniversary exhibit of the *Enola Gay*'. (Available in the UK from Gazelle Book Services Ltd, Falcon House, Queen Square, Lancaster LA1 1RN.)

Before we leave the Far East, news came in October 1994 that efforts by historians and preservationists to stop the demolition of the World War II headquarters of the Japanese Imperial Army had failed. This was the building where the post-war trials of the Japanese leaders were held and where they were sentenced to death (see issue 81). Also, one of Japan's most gifted writers, novelist Yukio Mishima, committed hara-kiri on the balcony of the building in 1970 following a self-styled coup for revision of the country's US-imposed constitution and restoration of the Emperor as formal Head of State.

According to Japan's Defence Ministry, the fate of the building was decided in 1987 when the site was chosen for the erection of a new skyscraper headquarters. Nevertheless, more than 90 pressure groups petitioned parliament for the preservation of the building which they wanted to see used as a World War II 50th anniversary museum. The national press supported the preservation, *Asahi Shimbun* writing that 'young people should learn about modern history. For this, the best thing to do is to stand in the actual place where history was made'. Something we have done in *After the Battle* for nearly a quarter-century!

Above: **The Japanese war crimes trial of the Class A prisoners took place at the Imperial Army Headquarters located on a hill near the centre of Tokyo known as the Ichigawa Heights.** *Below:* **The demolition began on October 21, 1994 with the dismantling of the auditorium where the court sat. (Kyodo News Service)**

However, one building with an important Second World War connection has been preserved — and brilliantly. The Royal Herbert Hospital on Shooters Hill Road in south-east London was abandoned and in pretty poor shape when we featured it in issue 70 in November 1990. One of its wards was used to treat Luftwaffe airmen shot down over Britain but, after it was closed as a hospital, one could not predict if it had a future. Now, Parkview Homes, who have a well-deserved reputation for sensitive restoration and high standards of craftsmanship, have converted the hospital into a series of apartment blocks with an associated leisure complex (see illustration), a project which won the company the *Evening Standard* New Homes Award for 1992.

Following our description in issue 86 of the preservation work of EWACS, the group which physically cuts out wall murals from buildings at risk, we received a letter from France in which Jacqueline Wurmlinger of Fontaine-Etoupefour told us of the activities of her 'Amis des Graffiti' society which collects and studies inscriptions and drawings in Calvados. Although their basic interest goes back to wall carvings of the 17th century, sometimes they come across others dating from the Battle of Normandy which have been cut in the soft limestone by soldiers stationed in the area.

Graffiti Anglais et Américain en Normandie. *Left:* **A Spit in a garage in Caen.** *Right:* **A 1944 pin-up on a kitchen wall.**

Several readers wrote to me to say they felt slightly cheated when I did not reveal what had happened to the daughter of Violette Szabo, whose exploits were featured in issue 86. The reason was simple: I am not an editor whose wish is to pry into people's lives unless they agree, and I had been told that Tania, orphaned at the age of three, was now a very private person. I did arrange to have a letter forwarded to her, but when no response was forthcoming, I decided to end our story with her receiving her mother's posthumous VC.

Tania lives and works in the Channel Islands, and when Michael Ginns of the Jersey Branch of the Channel Islands' Occupation Society wrote to tell me that she was invited to join the VIP stand on Liberation Day in May 1995, and with the *Mail on Sunday* having featured her in a visit to Ravensbrück concentration camp, I now feel at ease in including this photograph of her taken close to the spot where her mother was shot.

Left: **Tania Szabo;** *(right)* **her screen counterpart, Pauline Challoner, now British Consul in Nice. (Solo Syndication/Daily Telegraph).**

Left: **Michael Ginns with his wife, Josephine, outside the Palace. 'Officially', says Michael, 'the award was for "services to the community", but in fact it was for Occupation Society work in promoting reconciliation and organising receptions for Jersey D-Day veterans on June 6, 1994.'** *Right:* **A fine example of the restoration work undertaken by the Channel Islands Occupation Society. Geoffrey Zimmer sent this shot of the 15.5cm French piece in its full glory at Les Landes (see issue 73).**

Michael, incidentally, received a long-overdue reward in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 1995 for all the work he has carried out as the secretary of the Jersey branch of the Society (see *War in the Channel Islands Then and Now*). In his note to me enclosing a photo taken after he attended Buckingham Palace, Michael, tongue in cheek as ever, said that he reckoned that his MBE was equal to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross!

Peter Thompson (mentioned earlier, page 42) visited Lüneburg in June 1995 and sent pictures of a memorial stone which has been set up where the German surrender in north-west Germany was signed (issue 48). It appears that the stone had just been unveiled at the base of the Timeloberg hill on the 50th anniversary — May 4, 1995 — although no mention was made on the accompanying display board that Montgomery had renamed the feature Victory Hill!

Right: **'Kapitulation auf dem Timeloberg.' The original monument on Victory Hill was removed to Britain in 1958.**

On the rear cover of issue 88 I featured Bob Russell re-enacting the Hitler salute he had given in May 1945 on the balcony of the Reich Chancellery in Berlin. Bob had emigrated to Australia after the war and David Green met him by chance. I could not resist asking him to act the part once again, but it seems that this piece of typically British humour was lost on our Continental friends. My Dutch European Editor, Karel Margry, took me to task for including the picture, explaining that readers in Europe would not see the funny side of it and would take offence. I quite understand that those who suffered under Nazi oppression are entitled to hold a different view, but personally I thought it was a harmless piece of fun, made in the same spirit as when it was originally given in 1945.

We felt that we could not let the 50th anniversary of Bob Russell's mock salute pass without returning to Berlin in May 1995. Armed with a tape measure, Karel Margry established the precise position of the Chancellery balcony (50 metres exactly from the old building line in Voss-strasse), although the modern block in the Wilhelmstrasse (the name reverted from Otto-Grotewohl-Strasse after reunification) lays back from where the balcony once stood (see issue 61).

Exploring the Eastern Front. Keith Spanner was on the bank of the Elbe *(above left)* for the 50th anniversary of the East-West link-up and at Westerplatte *(above)* for the 55th commemoration of the beginning of the Second World War.

That same issue was the subject of a letter from Keith Spanner of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, who was at Torgau for the 50th anniversary. There, on April 25, 1995, he was able to picture Martin Bell interviewing Alexander Silvashko and Igor Belousovitch live for BBC *Breakfast Time* TV on the bank of the Elbe. Keith wrote that 'I was fortunate to meet one of the Soviet participants in the Kreinitz re-enactment, Lyobov Kozinchenko (issue 88, pages 9–10) and Bill Robertson (page 20).

'I also visited Westerplatte on September 1 for the 55th anniversary there', continued Keith. 'This year was the first time that the German Armed Forces were permitted to lay a wreath because of the recently-signed agreement with the Poles.'

Keith is a well-travelled battlefield explorer and previously he had visited Prokhorovka in Russia which he describes as 'literally the WWII equivalent of the Somme. This area, part of the Kursk battlefield, is littered with relics and remains including pieces of armour signifying that the greatest tank battle took place here in this relatively small area. I enclose photos of objects regrettably I could not fit into my suitcase! As you can imagine, one had to be wary what one picked up. My Russian friends also took me to an original German grave site in the north and, while I was there 51 years after the battle, the Russians reburied the remains of 13 Soviet soldiers.'

Keith: 'I enclose copies of slides I took on July 12, 1994 at the reburial of 13 Red Army soldiers killed at the battle of Prokhorovka, 51 years before. This ceremony took place in a small village called Storozhevoe which is south-east of the main tank battle area, which was essentially fought between the River Psel and the Moscow-Kharkov rail line. However, 2. SS-Panzer-Division 'Das Reich' crossed over the railway south of Storozhevoe and reached the village on the morning of July 12, with the obvious intention of taking the town of Prokhorovka from the rear, thus cutting the supply lines of the Soviet 5th Guards Tank Army from the east.'

'The ground on the Storozhevoe side of the railway line has been cultivated so there are always battle relics being turned over in the soil. The area is right off the beaten track like most places in Russia!'

Duindigt racecourse 1945-1995. A monument *(above left)* was unveiled on April 30, 1995 to record the food-dropping operations of April-May 1945.

One of the more unusual 50th commemorations was that held in the Netherlands for more than 100 former aircrews and their wives who took part in Operations 'Manna' and 'Chowhound' in April-May 1945. This was the joint British-US operation, sanctioned by the Germans, to drop food to starving civilians in Holland. Well-defined drop zones and approach corridors over occupied territory were laid down, the Germans agreeing not to harass or interfere with the mercy flights. Ivo M. de Jong of Harderwijk told me in his letter of July 1995: 'On April 29, the RAF started with their Operation "Manna" and, in all, 242 Lancasters and 36 Mosquitos of Nos. 1, 3 and 8 Groups, RAF, dropped 535 tons of food at the airfields of Valkenburg, Ypenburg, Waalhaven and the Duindigt race-track near The Hague. On the 30th, the RAF dropped almost twice the tonnage of the day before. On May 1, ten bomb groups of the Eighth Air Force's Third Air Division joined them. The American code-name for their operation was "Chowhound". This day, no less than 492 Lancasters and 396 B-17s dropped some 1,817 tons of food.

'Both air forces continued flying until May 8. By then, "Manna" and "Chowhound" had provided the starving Dutch population with 10,913 tons of food. This drastically decreased the number who would have died and, besides that, the sight of the low-flying Lancasters and Flying Fortresses was an immense boost to the morale of the civilians in those last two difficult weeks of their occupation.

'The efforts of the RAF and USAAF were not forgotten by the Dutch population. On April 30, 1995, a monument was unveiled at the Duindigt race-track near The Hague which had seen no less than 1,500 tons of food being dropped, mainly by the RAF. During a short ceremony the monument was unveiled by the chairmen of the "Manna Association" and "Chowhound Brotherhood" at the exact site where they flew across 50 years earlier. Highlight of the programme was a short parade in front of HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands at the Soestdijk Palace on May 3.'

Ultra (issue 37) continues to interest readers, and John Taylor sent me a copy of his privately-published booklet *Secret Intelligence*. He has also produced *Discovering Milton Keynes* which covers the Ultra stations in the area and also the 'Black Propaganda' locations (see issue 75). More details can be obtained from Quotes Ltd, The Book Barn, Whittlebury, NN12 8SX.

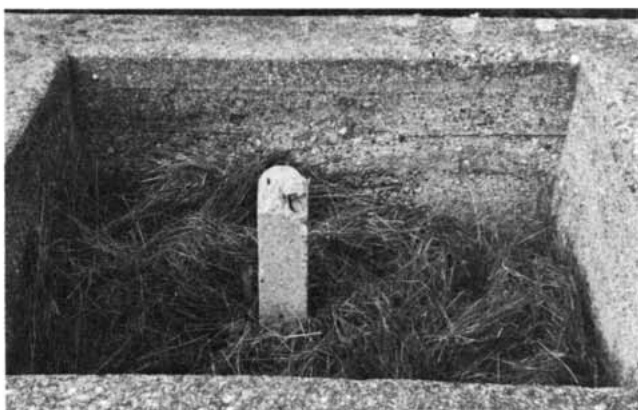
Bletchley Park has now been preserved and an embryo museum was opened there in 1994. This has expanded with an MT section comprising around 30 privately-owned military vehicles which add colour to the open days which are held every other weekend.

In issue 85 (page 20), I gave details of the efforts being made by the Bletchley Park Trust to preserve Britain's wartime code-breaking headquarters. On VE-Day, the Trust asked the National Lottery for £12.5 million of the £25 million cost of buying and restoring the Buckinghamshire site but the application was turned down in November 1995. One important adjunct to the project is the military vehicle section which occupies the former motor pool garages. Part of the Military Vehicle Trust, the Bletchley Park MVT works under the enthusiastic Gordon Beale. Visitors can watch the restoration and preservation of its 30-plus vehicles (like this 1943 Fordson WOT6) which also provide colour on open days.

'Last Sunday, I walked the Epping Forest area along the River Roding', wrote Colin Alexander of Didcot, Oxfordshire, in November 1994. As a member of the Fortress Study Group, Colin is one of the many WWII enthusiasts taking part in the Defence of Britain survey. 'In the forest area, sections of the 1940 anti-tank ditch are still visible near Lodge Road (map reference TQ432999). Deeper in the forest, south of Jacks Hill and near Centenary Walk (TQ434991), a deep section of ditch runs north-west to the Theydon Bois Road (B172). The ditch appears to leave the forest near Debben Green and probably ran to the Roding. However, I was unable to trace any defence works in this area. A number of people I met in the forest remembered the ditch and the road-blocks, but nobody recalled pillboxes being built in the forest. Perhaps the Home Army ignored the lessons from the Battle of France and considered Epping Forest tank proof! North of the M25, in the open grounds of Copped Hall, I discovered three more Type 27 infantry pillboxes (TL436022, TL436016, TL434013) and the dumped remains of a metal rail road-block (TL436021).These are very rare — only a few examples remain in the UK — as the scrap man usually got there first!'

It was certainly pleasing to read that the voices of WWII enthusiasts and historians were at last being heard in another direction when, in October 1994, it was announced that a grant of £48,500 was being made by the Department of National Heritage to document every site connected with the defence of Britain during the Second World War. Pioneering work like that by Henry Wills (issue 14) and Fred Nash (issue 81) had already led to some defence works (like the pillboxes along the Kennet and Avon Canal) being listed (i.e. made protected buildings), and the new initiative was designed to let English Heritage know which other WWII relics were worth preserving. The five-year study was to be carried out by a team of co-ordinators being set up by the Fortress Study Group and the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) with, it was hoped, the help of other interested individuals and groups. Relevant literature on the 'The Defence of Britain' project can be obtained from the Imperial War Museum, Duxford Airfield, Cambridge, CB2 4QR.

English Heritage had already commissioned a survey to be conducted by the CBA into 'Metal Detecting and Archaeology in England'. Geoff Wainwright, Chief Archaeologist at English Heritage, said: 'With the results of this survey we can begin to understand the real impact of metal detecting on archaeology. There's no denying that it has brought considerable benefits to archaeology, but it has also brought irreparable damage to some scheduled sites and excavations.'

The conflict between the metal detecting fraternity and archaeologists developed as a result of the growth in the popularity of the hobby in the late 1970s. It has become less popular over the last decade but detectorists have been accused of 'robbing' the country of its heritage by not declaring their finds and of destroying clues which could help in the discovery or interpretation of other archaeological material. Current estimates suggest there are around 30,000 amateur metal detectorists operating in England alone, of which about two-thirds are thought to be 'serious' hobbyists.

Then Chris Rock wrote from Middlesborough, Cleveland. 'Whilst researching within my particular area, I came across a well-hidden pillbox covering the main Redcar to Middlesborough road. As you can see from the photo of the rear of the pillbox, there is a concrete pintle. After speaking to the farmer (who remembers the bunker being built in 1940) he assured me it was the fixing for a light machine gun on the few occasions that the pillbox was manned. Could the two identical brackets I found under some scrub be from that fixture and is the metal case a brass shell case? The farmer recalled an AA battery on the opposite side of the road and as a boy he would often scrounge spent shell cases from the soldiers. As a postscript, he said there was also a manned road-block on the main road about 100 yards along from the pillbox, which consisted of concrete blocks placed across the road with a gap left to allow any local traffic through. Again, after a quick scout of the area, guess what I found in the garden of a local cottage: about 12 concrete blocks stacked up in a pile!'

I am always interested to spot news items which reflect on past stories included in the magazine, and in November 1995 I noted that an Enigma machine had been sold at auction at Phillips, New Bond Street, London. An unnamed German businessman paid £10,780 for it but I remembered that a German reader had written to me in 1985 with some for sale — the price then being about £3,000, so anyone who purchased one then has a nice little earner!

Also in November 1995, Sir Winston Churchill's Sten gun was sold at Christie's for £10,125. When I did the story in issue 22, two Stens previously owned by him were for sale, but then (1978) private ownership of fully-automatic weapons in Britain, even deactivated, was virtually impossible. One needed a special permit from the Ministry of Defence — very tightly controlled — but these were all withdrawn in 1971.

Now, of course, this has all changed and since 1988 it has been possible to own any number of deactivated fully automatic weapons with *no firearms certificate at all!* In my view, this liberalisation of the law by the Home Office — *and as a direct result of the Hungerford massacre* — was absolute lunacy. There was no public pressure for such a drastic reversal of policy — in fact with armed crime on the increase there was every reason for retaining the status quo. Now, it has resulted in many such weapons being re-activated for use by criminals.

Liberalisation of a more welcome kind came in 1993 with the publication of the White Paper introducing more open government in Britain. The Official Secrets Act had been widely criticised for putting a clamp on anything and everything that the government deemed it wanted to keep from the public, including certain records from the Second World War.

I have commented before — particularly where our crime stories are concerned — that records of British court-martials were closed for at least 75 years. On the other hand, American records are freely available, which has inevitably meant more coverage of US crime, resulting in an unfair imbalance with British and Commonwealth forces. When I raised this with the Lord Chancellor's office in September 1995, the official response was that 'all court-martial records, not just case files, over 30 years have been reviewed for personal or other sensitive material. The majority have now been released for public inspection, but some case files remain closed and a few others await final clearance.' This new ruling enabled me to research the mutiny on Cocos (issue 91), an incident which I knew had taken place but could previously get no information on.

War pilot is laid to rest 54 years on

Spitfire pilot finds peace after 54 years

FUNERAL GO-AHEAD AS RELIC HUNTER WHO FOUND BODY IS F

Hero's grave at last for forgotten man of The Few

cry over dig Spitfire pilot

Spitfire p remains d

Law broken to give pilot a funeral

Coroner backs search for war crash airmen

The Protection of Military Remains Act came into force in 1986, but it really arrived too late to halt the large number of 'exhumations' of RAF and Luftwaffe personnel which had been carried out by aviation archaeologists over the previous 15 years. We have documented many of these cases in *The Battle of Britain Then and Now* and the three volumes of *The Blitz Then and Now*. The legislation was mainly prompted by the activities of one particular group of individuals who felt justified in their work, claiming that they were only doing what the authorities should have done immediately after the war: allowing the dead to receive a proper burial.

The first prosecution of an aviation archaeologist under the Act came in December 1994 when Mark Kirby of Tonbridge, Kent, excavated, without the permission of the Ministry of Defence, the crash site of a Spitfire which had come down near Chilham, Kent, in February 1941. Under the Military Remains Act, anyone wishing to dig up a Second World War aircraft in Britain has to have a licence from the MoD, which is now only granted if it is known that the pilot or crew baled out.

Mark Kirby knew the aircraft was that of Sergeant John Gilders of No. 72 Squadron, and he had contacted the pilot's family who had tried for 53 years to locate him (despite being told by the MoD that he had come down in the English Channel). They wanted the excavation to take place, and Mark and his friends also felt that a ploughed field was not a suitable grave for a war hero.

When the case came to court in December 1994, Mark's action was vindicated and he was given an absolute discharge. At the subsequent inquest, Brian Smith, the Coroner for Ashford and Shepway, actually warned the Ministry of Defence that it could not prevent amateur aircraft archaeologists from exhuming bodies from crashed aircraft. In a landmark judgement, Mr Smith said it was for coroners to grant exhumation licences where bodies were found on public land, and the MoD had no jurisdiction.

Doing what should have been done after the war: recovering the honoured dead.